





Padden

A

POOR RELATION

BY

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A POOR RELATION.

CHAPTER I.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

“ 'Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it.”
—ADDISON. *Cato*.

“WELL, here we are, my dears; and we must make the best of it.” But Mrs. Hartley sighed as she spoke.

“It's not at all a bad little drawing-room, mother,” said her elder daughter, Grace, putting a few finishing touches to the room with deft fingers.

“It's a nasty little poky room!” said Maude, who was eighteen, and two years younger than Grace. “I wonder who will call upon us here?”

“Well,” said Grace, “we may be sure no one will call upon us because they think we are rich; and they won't come because they think we've a good position in society. How can they, when we live in such an insignificant little house? So, if they come at all, it will be because they want to know us for ourselves.”

“Nobody'll come,” said Maude, disconsolately, spoiling her pretty face by pouting.

“I'm not at all afraid,” said Grace, arranging her mother's sofa-blanket carefully. “There is always some one, even in the most remote place. There'll be a clergyman, at all events.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Hartley, with another sigh, this time

of satisfaction. There would, at any rate, be one person to whom she could unburden her mind of the anxieties which her reduced circumstances had brought upon her.

"A fox-hunting country parson," said Maude, rebelliously, "or a man whose mind has become torpid with living in such a dull place!"

"For shame, Maude!" exclaimed Grace; "you forget Grandpapa was a country clergyman."

"A Farmer!" said Maude, laughing; "isn't that what they call clergymen who take to farming?"

"My dear Maude, you are incorrigible," said her mother, reprovingly.

"Forgive me, mother darling," said Maude, throwing one arm caressingly round her mother's neck, "but I can just remember grandpapa showing me his *pigs*!" and, her ill humor all vanishing in a moment, she laughed merrily.

"There's some one coming now, at all events," said Grace, as a firm, light step was to be heard on the gravel outside. "Oh! it's only Jack."

"And isn't that enough?" demanded a slight but tall youth of seventeen, who entered one of the glass doors as he spoke. "Mother, I've been out reconnoitering. There's a squire's house—the Hall, I suppose. And, a little way out of the village, a gentleman-farmer's large house, and some smaller farmhouses. One a delightful old grange in which Job lives."

"Job?" asked Maude.

"Yes; not he of patience unparalleled, but the most grumbling, cantankerous old fellow I've come across for some time. As I held the door open while I was talking to them he did nothing but complain that I let in a draught of cold air on his rheumatics."

"Of course you would," said Grace. "Poor old man! Why didn't you shut the door?"

"Daren't!" said Jack, laughing and dropping into an easy-chair with a gesture of feigned terror, which made them all laugh.

"And isn't there a church, and a vicarage?" asked Maude.

"Yes; old and gray and worn, both of them," said Jack, "and they're rather in a hollow. I couldn't find them at first. They want restoring dreadfully. But I don't suppose the clergyman cares much about that. They say he's an old antiquarian, and does not visit much, or preach very lively sermons. But he's a scholar and a gentleman."

"There, Maude," said Grace, "you see you were quite wrong about what he would be like."

"Well," she retorted, "if he's one of that sort he won't be much good to us. I expect I shall go to sleep while he's preaching; I never can stand dry sermons."

"I'll keep you awake, Maude, you may be sure," said Jack, "for I won't have any disrespect shown to him, I can tell you. The jolliest girl I've seen for a long time says he's the *dearest* old man."

"Jack," cried Maude, "tell us about that jolliest girl instantly."

"Well, you must know," said her brother, "that, while I was trying to find out where the church was from a deaf old stone-breaker by the roadside, she rode by and graciously came to the rescue and told me what I wanted to know."

"And then you got talking?"

"And then we got talking. And she asked if I was one of the new people who had come to Ivy Cottage, and

I said 'Yes, and wasn't it a little hole?' and she laughed and said I was to speak more respectfully of her father's property."

"Then she was Miss Ingham?" said Mrs. Hartley.

"Yes."

"I wonder if they are rich people?"

"No; she said they were not rich enough to restore the church properly."

"She must have been a very frank, outspoken girl," said Grace.

"Not a bit like what I thought she would be," said Maude. "I heard they were poor—the charwoman told me—and so I thought they'd be very stuck up and proud. Poor gentlefolks are always twice as proud as rich people. They are so frightened that, unless they are, people will not see *what* they are."

"Real gentlefolk don't feel in that way," said Grace; "they know what they are, and so don't care to be always asserting it. Their position is secure, whatever people think."

"I've heard father say the same thing," said Jack; "only he put it better than you do, Gracie."

"Of course he did," said Grace, emphatically.

"But, seriously, girls," said their mother, "we must consider what we shall do, now that we have to live upon our sadly reduced income." And again she sighed deeply.

An officer's widow, brought up in a comfortable rectory, and married, in due time, to a military man of good family, who was anything but poor, Mrs. Hartley was, late in life, ill fitted to cope with the poverty which had unexpectedly come upon her. Speculations which her husband embarked in proved unfortunate; Gerald, the

eldest son's, expenses at Oxford were very great; a bank in which the Hartleys had much money failed, and all this ill news came just in time to shorten Mr. Hartley's already enfeebled life. He died, and his widow left the beautiful home in which much of their married life had been passed and came with her children to the small village of Marburn, near Rushton—that is, only a mile and a half off—in Kent, thinking that there, in retirement, they might hide their poverty from their old friends, and, with frugal management, at least contrive to live. That was her idea; but the young people, as was natural, wished to see whatever society the neighborhood afforded.

“I should think it will not cost much living here, mother, with just one young servant,” said Grace.

“I'm afraid she will require a great deal of help,” said her mother, anxiously.

“Never mind, I'll help her,” said Grace. “I know how to cook.” She was a very sweet-looking girl, with an oval face, great brown eyes and a quantity of dark-brown hair. She was rather tall, too, and her name had not been inappropriately given, for she was graceful. Maude, on the other hand, was rather small and a little inclined to stoutness, but her face was a very pretty one, her complexion was charming, and she had great blue eyes and golden hair.

“Gerald and I must work,” said Jack, “and increase the family income.”

“What can *you* do, Jack?” asked his mother, dismally. “*You* are too young to do anything. Gerald might get a clerkship.”

“Oh, yes, mother!” said Grace, eagerly. “Mr. Lancaster has already written to offer him one. I was going

to tell you, only—" She stopped short, having just remembered that she had concluded from the way in which Gerald mentioned it in his letter that he did not mean to accept it, and so had hesitated about letting their mother know lest she should be afterward disappointed.

"That is good news," said Mrs. Hartley, more cheerfully than she had yet spoken. "Mr. Lancaster is a true friend."

"He is," said Jack, with emphasis.

"It's a pity we have not some rich relations to help us just now," said Maude. "We could do with a rich uncle, or aunt. To be sure there is papa's cousin, Lord Granton. But he does nothing for us."

Mrs. Hartley sighed. "He is a selfish man," she said. "We must not count upon his help; and besides him we have no near relations." And then, looking a little troubled at some recollections, she added: "At least, you have only your poor Uncle Jack, in America."

"We have hardly ever heard anything about him," said Grace, thoughtfully. "He is papa's brother, is he not, mother?"

"Yes, a younger brother. I don't know much about him. But he could not get on in England some way. Whatever he did he failed in, and so his friends persuaded him to go abroad. Your father was always very fond of him, and made excuses for his failures, and always declared that though he lacked experience, there was the making of a fine character in him. However, we will not talk about this any more. If your Uncle Jack is living I trust he will stay in America, for I'm afraid he will be no credit to us."

She looked so disturbed that Jack hastened to speak of something else.

"If Gerald gets that clerkship," he said, "and I get some sort of work as well, we shall be able to live more comfortably, shall we not, mother?"

"Yes," she replied, in a tone of relief.

"I might get some pupils," said Grace; "I shall try, anyway. What shall you do, Maude?"

"I'll take care of mother," said Maude, airily; "we must not *all* leave her."

"Maude always chooses the hardest work," said Jack, laughing.

Maude pretended to box his ears, and, just then, the door-window was darkened by the tall figure of a young man of twenty-two.

"Maude, you tomboy!" exclaimed the newcomer, entering.

"Why, Gerald!" cried Mrs. Hartley, "what a long time you have been in following us here! But I'm so glad you have come at last, dear." And she looked with delight and pride at her eldest son's handsome face and manly figure.

He stooped to kiss her brow. "How do you do, mother? Thought I'd wait until you were quite settled before I troubled you with my presence," and he sat down beside her and held her hand, as if the most tender consideration for her had alone kept him from her side.

"Troubled!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Gerald, home is not home without you, my boy," and then she added: "But how thoughtful of you!"

"Very," said Grace, dryly. "*Jack* helped us a great deal. I don't know what we should have done without him."

"But, Grace," cried Maude, "we couldn't expect Gerald to do such things!"

"Didn't it occur to you, Gerald, that you might help us, too?" persisted Grace, ignoring Maude's speech altogether. "You know," she continued, "it isn't as if you only did this once, but several times lately when there has been any work to be done you have got out of the way of it. Is that right, Gerald?"

He looked at his white hands and smiled. "I don't think the sort of help Jack gives you is much in my line," he said. "Good heavens! child, when I help you, it will be in a very different way. Wait until I get on, and then I'll take you all to something—well, in a very different style from this," and he looked with contempt at the poor, inexpensive furniture the little room contained and shrugged his shoulders.

"That's it," cried Maude, triumphantly, "I knew he was thinking of doing *great things* for us all. You'll make us all rich some day, won't you, Gerald?"

"Of course," he returned, complacently.

"Some day may be a long way off," said Grace, coldly, "and meanwhile, meanwhile, Gerald?"

"Meanwhile, my dear Grace," he said, a slight frown ruffling the serenity of his smooth brow, "I would advise you when you make observations to make *pleasant* ones."

"Yes, Grace," said her mother, meaningly.

The tears came into the girl's eyes, but she said nothing. That was always the way with Gerald. If any one ever insinuated that his conduct was not perfect, instead of amending his ways, he hastened to assure them that they, or their observations, were not pleasant. Gerald, like many another, would fain have made away with all prophets who did not prophesy smooth things.

"I am sure," said his mother, tearfully—she had all

his life spoiled this, her first born—"no one wants to help us more than Gerald does. He is now going to take his father's place as head of the family, and I know, Grace, you mean well, but we must all give him the *respect* that is due to his position."

Grace did not answer. She was kneeling down, arranging some trifles on a little "what-not" in a corner of the room, and her thoughts were far away, with a new grave in a distant cemetery, where rested the remains of one who never misunderstood her. From her father she had learned many wise lessons, and among others to be silent when people would not see things as she did. "Abbot Sampson," he would say, quoting from a book he knew almost off by heart—"Abbot Sampson was not nobody because nobody thought anything about him. A truth is true, whatever people say to the contrary, and there is not the slightest use in making a fuss about it."

"You got my letter, Grace?" said Gerald, by way of showing her that he bore her no ill will.

"Yes," she answered, looking at him pleadingly, "and I have just been telling mother about Mr. Lancaster's kind offer."

"And, oh, Gerald, I am so pleased," said Mrs. Hartley. "Yes, I know it is not what a University man looks for, but just now it will at least keep the wolf from the door until you have time to hear of something else."

"And a University man, who has not yet got his degree—" Jack was beginning, when a glance at his brother's face made him stop short.

"We'll talk about this another time," Gerald said to his mother, in a tone of much displeasure.

Jack rose. "Well, I'm off," he said, "so you needn't

wait for another time." And he left the room, shutting the door rather sharply after him.

"How rude the boy is!" said Gerald, still in a tone of great displeasure. "I don't know what I shall do with him, shut up here together in this little place."

"But you won't be here, dear," said his mother. "If you accept the clerkship you will have to be in town."

"The clerkship?" he said, and knit his brows again. "Oh, I didn't accept it. What's a hundred and twenty pounds a year? And to slave away at a desk!"

"Surely you haven't refused it?" cried his mother.

"My dear mother," he said, in a tone of horror, "it's so caddish to sit on a high stool in an office all day, copying, forever copying! Would you doom your son to that?"

"But—but there is nothing else at present," she said. "Oh, Gerald! say you have not refused it."

"I have. Lancaster ought to have known better than to have made the offer. I asked him how he would like a son of his own to have such a post."

"And what did he say?" asked Grace, quietly.

"That, Grace, I prefer not to repeat. Lancaster is low—decidedly low."

"He was your father's friend," said his mother, with something in her tone as near reproach as she could make it when the wrongdoer was Gerald.

"My dear mother," he returned, twirling his mustache, "you know father's good nature. He was a friend to all the world. Fellows put upon him awfully."

"But, Gerald, what shall you do instead?" asked his mother.

"Oh, I shall wait here until something turns up—that is, if you will have me," and he smiled into her troubled face.

She began to cry, and hid her face against his shoulder. Grace stole away and left them. Poor mother! And still poorer son! What could the future do for them? for him?

As Grace passed Jack's tiny room, on her way to her own, he called her in. He was sitting on the little mattress he had appropriated for himself, because he considered it too hard for any one else; and his room looked more like a workshop than a sleeping apartment, so very crowded was it with tools and canvases, a big easel and one or two half-finished pictures.

"Look here, Grace," he said, "I'm going to give up my dreams of being an artist, just for a bit, and I'm going to do something more practical instead. I know shorthand and I can typewrite, and, what's better still, I've got my own machine yet"—looking at a Barlock typewriter's case which stood strapped up on the floor just as it had arrived. "And I found Rushton is quite a big place, has its own newspaper, the *Rushton and Packlinton Advertiser*, so I'm going off to the office there to see if I can get work—a reporter's place, or something."

"That would be capital," said Grace; "but perhaps they will have no vacancy."

"Well, I may not succeed, but I'm going off to try now. Wish me good luck, Gracie," and he rose and seized his cap.

"Jack," she whispered, as she kissed him and gave him a playful little push toward the door, "I can only say, whether you get success or not, you will deserve it."

CHAPTER II.

THE TURNERS.

“The world is happy, the world is wide,
Kind hearts are beating on every side;
Ah! why should we lie so coldly curled
Alone in the shell of this great world?”

—J. R. LOWELL.

It was a fine bright day in the beginning of October. Sunshine lighted up and beautified every object out of doors. It enhanced the splendors of the changing colors of the foliage everywhere—on trees, hedges and hillsides, and stole into the hearts of mankind, bringing with it the light of hope and health and beauty.

Only in the large, low-roofed kitchen of Marburn Old Grange a cloud of darkness and depression seemed to gather about the presence of an old man greatly bent with the ravages of rheumatism, who cowered beside a glowing fire as if it were the depths of winter and he had only just come in out of the biting cold.

“It’s these rheumatics,” he groaned. “I’m not the man I was, Mary; I’m not that.”

A tall, straight, elderly woman, with a handsome, refined face, was ironing fine starched linen at the square table which stood in the middle of the spotlessly clean kitchen. She set down her iron on its stand and turned to look at her husband with tender pity in her eyes.

“You’ve had a bad night, Job,” she said, “and a worse morning. But, please God, you’ll get on all right again, with a little care. You didn’t ought to have gone across them wet turnip-fields yesterday. I knew how it would be when I seed you coming in all dripping.”

"It would never have mattered at one time. I'm gettin' old, that's it," he grumbled.

"And if old, so much nearer rest," she said, gently, as she went on ironing.

"Ay, but will it be rest?" he muttered, but in so low a tone that she could only just hear him.

"Surely, surely," she replied, soothingly. "You've been a good man, Job; a good husband to me, a good master to your men and a good father to George, and when a man's been all that he's not left wi'out hope o' rising higher."

"Have I been a good father to t' lad, Mary?" asked the old man, despondently. "I did think once that I should have a good farm to leave him, and a nice bit o' brass, same as my father left me. But you know I've had to part wi' the best land, bit by bit, and a man can scarcely make a living out of the rest."

"But you've given George a grand education, Job, and he's a clever lad; he'll never look behind him," said Mrs. Turner, with a smile of motherly pride.

"But he ought to have as good a farm as my father left me," went on the old man, querulously. "How is it that we've not got on and prospered like some o' them as haven't done half so rightly as we have? Look at that Crossland, now. Old Crossland were a right wicked man, drinkin' and swearin' awful, and his son's not been so good as he out to ha' been, neither. He's a spendthrift an' a lazy-bones; you never see him doin' a turn o' work hisself. Too proud 'appen! And yet them two's prospered, and we haven't."

His wife once more set down her iron, and came and knelt on the thick rug beside him, and laid her folded hands upon his knee. "Job," she said, in a low, tender

tone, "don't you remember it says in the Bible that some such thoughts as them came into the mind of the Psalmist when he said: 'I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree'?"

"Ay, ay," he interrupted, "spreading hisself like a green bay-tree—that's it—that's Crossland."

"Whoever it is," returned his wife, "so long as he's wicked there'll be punishment comin' to him. The next verse says: 'He passed away, and lo, he was not; yea I sought him, but he could not be found.'"

"Could not be found," repeated her husband; "that's him—that's Crossland!"

His wife began to have misgivings as to *his* state of mind. "I'd leave names out, Job," she said, gently. "Meybee the Almighty doesn't like us to judge folk. That's His work. Now," she hurried on, for Job did not like even such a mild remonstrance as this, and was opening his mouth to repeat his denunciation of his more prosperous but less upright neighbor, "let's think of what follows; ye see, I know the Psalm by heart, and the next verse is a favorite of mine. 'Mark the perfect man'—Job, dear, we'll try and be as perfect as we can—'mark the perfect man, for the end of that man is peace.'"

"There's some one comin' to the door," said the old man, petulantly.

His wife arose; she, too, had caught sight of a lady passing the window on her way to the door. "Job," she said, "it's Miss Hartley. You know I took the liberty of sending a few fresh eggs for her poor, delicate mother. She'll have come to thank me. Molly's upstairs. I must go to the door," and she hastened from the kitchen.

In a few moments she returned with Grace Hartley,

who was thanking her very prettily for her kind present. The old man tried to rise, but she stopped him.

"Oh, don't, Mr. Turner," she exclaimed; "don't get up. I'm so sorry you are such a sufferer."

"You must excuse me, miss," he said, giving up the attempt to rise. "Yes, I do suffer. I'm getting old, and I'm obliged to work sometimes. Times is bad for farmers, very bad; gets worse and worse."

Then Grace knew she stood before the "Job" her brother Jack had described as not being of unparalleled patience. She tried to think of something comforting to say, but the puckered, discontented face seemed to chill all such thoughts as they rose, so she turned to Mrs. Turner, and was struck with the sweet, patient expression of her face.

"Ah! but you have a good nurse in your wife, Mr. Turner," she said, with a bright smile. "Why, it must almost charm the pain away to see her ironing those dainty frills so beautifully."

The old man's face changed; he gave a little chuckle which was not unlike a laugh.

"Ay, but you've hit it," he said, "that's the best comfort I have, miss."

"A very good one," she said; "but you know there is even better comfort than that."

"Nay, nay," he returned, shaking his head, and beginning to grumble again about the rheumatics and the hard times.

"You know what I mean, Mrs. Turner," said Grace.

"Yes, thank God, I do. And he will, too, some day," she said, with happy confidence.

"Have you any daughters?" asked Grace.

"No, only one son; only George," answered Mrs. Turner. "You've perhaps heard of our George, miss?"

Grace had heard of him. He was said to be very clever, and altogether a most superior young man.

"He's invented more than one thing which the farmers about here find very useful," said Mrs. Turner, "and he's taken out patents for them; but no money s come of it yet."

"Money's hard to come by," grumbled the old man.

"Yes, it is," said Grace, frankly, "but I don't see why we should break our hearts for that. There are many other good things—health, for instance—"

"Which I 'aven't got," he interrupted.

"And love," and she smiled at him, as much as to say, "You have that, at any rate," and again her smile drew from him the nearest approach to a laugh that his wife had heard for a long time.

"Ay, miss," he said, "how you do get over me."

"Well," she said, "I don't think we ought to be always looking on the dark side of things. I read these lines years ago in a magazine, and thought them so good that they stayed in my memory—

" 'This life is all too sad for tears,
I would not weep, not I,
But smile along life's onward path
Until I smiling die.'

Surely that is a braver way of bearing troubles than sighing over them all along."

"Well, well, 'appen it is," said the old man, "and I must be patient. But here's George," and again the window was darkened for a moment by a passing figure.

"Well, father," said a rich and not uncultured voice, as a pleasant-looking young man of rather under middle

height entered the kitchen, and then stopped short at sight of the visitor.

“Well, my boy, here’s Miss Hartley.”

George Turner bowed and took the girl’s offered hand with evident pleasure. He had seen her many times in church from his place in the choir: he had a good baritone voice, and whenever he was at home he helped with the singing.

“She has been cheering your father up a little,” said Mrs. Turner.

“That was very kind of you,” he said to Grace. “Poor father has a hard time of it just now. He used to be so active, and now, just when he needs his activity the most, he is forced to sit still and leave the work to others.”

Grace was astonished at his ease of manner and his refined speech. This was no ordinary young farmer; and he did not in the least resemble his rough old father. But there was some likeness, more of expression than of feature, to his mother, and, like her, he held himself very erect. She glanced round the room. The floor was sanded, with a thick mat here and there, and before the fire a large home-made rag hearthrug, soft and clean and bright. Between the fireplace and the door there was a long, low lattice window, and in the broad window-seat lay two or three books and magazines, while a wide oak writing-table stood before it, and a bookcase, well filled with books, stood between the window and the door. Mrs. Turner’s dresser, with its shining crockery and the polished dishcovers above it, stood against another wall, while before the window at the other side of the room there was another kitchen table, above which hung a cage containing a bullfinch. In one corner near this window stood a small American organ.

"Do you play?" asked the girl, on seeing this.

"A little," he answered, modestly.

"Do you like reading?" she asked again, as her eyes rested on the books.

"Very much," was the instant reply. "What could we in the country do without books?"

"Ay, he's a rare lad for his books," replied the old farmer. "I should think he's read all t' books there is."

George hoped Grace had not heard this. But she laughed merrily, and exclaimed: "Why, Mr. Turner, how could he?"

"Well, I never seed such a reader. The parson said once he'd read more about some things—poetry or something—than he had hisself. Glued to a book, that's what he often is, and even when he was ever such a little lad it were the same. I never thrashed him but once, did I, mother? And that was 'cause he was so set on his book that he let the crows eat seed afore his very eyes when he was tenting in the field."

"I can remember that, father," said George, pleasantly. "You didn't hurt me much, and when you found that I had only been able to buy one volume of the two-volume book I was reading you brought me the other yourself that very evening."

"What a nice ending to the story!" said Grace. Then, rising, she said that she must be going; but the old man begged her so earnestly to stay and have a cup of tea with them that she sat down again.

Very much pleased at this—for she saw that the visitor was doing her husband real good by diverting his mind from his troubles—Mrs. Turner fetched Molly, the maid, downstairs to assist her in setting the table in her very best style. Meantime, Grace talked to George, and he

talked to her, and the old man sat and listened, well content, and sometimes throwing in an observation or a reminiscence of "when George was a bairn."

"I find some difficulty in getting new books here," said Grace, presently. "Of course there is no library, and—and we parted with most of our books when we had to come into a little—that is, when we came here."

"There is a very good library at Rushton," said George.

"Ah! but that is so far off. I cannot spare time to go there and back often."

"But I often see your brother going and coming," said George; "what could be easier than to get him to change the books?"

"Oh, Jack? He often has to carry a lot of books for his work when he's reading up for an article. I should not like to trouble him to carry mine, too."

"For his work," repeated George, in a puzzled tone; "he looks very young for work. May I ask what he does?"

"Certainly. He has become a reporter and a sort of general contributor to the *Rushton and Packlington Advertiser*," and there was some pride in Grace's tone.

"He must be a clever young gentleman," remarked Mrs. Turner, looking up from the bread she was cutting.

"Yes, he is," said Grace. "He's very young to get an appointment like that. I only hope the work won't be too heavy for him. It is a long way for him to go backward and forward so often, and he has to go to other places as well. To-day he is at Packlington; he has gone to report a lecture which is to be given there this evening, and he'll have to sit up writing all night after his return, so that it may appear in this week's paper."

He will have to be at Rushton with it by six o'clock in the morning."

"Well, now, George, you could give him a lift in the dogcart," said Mrs. Turner, "for you have to be there by that time yourself to-morrow."

"May I call for him as I pass?" asked George.

"Oh, certainly; he will be much obliged to you," and the girl looked quite pleased.

At tea-time, as they all, except the farmer, sat round the table, Mrs. Turner asked Grace how she liked Marburn.

"Very much," was the reply; "it is such a pretty little village, and the people are so kind. They all, from Miss Ingham, who takes my mother driving, to Mr. Crossland, who sends us game, and you, Mrs. Turner, who send eggs"—with a smile full of kindness—"seem to vie with each other in being good to the strangers who have come among them."

"Well, I hope we know how to behave," said Mrs. Turner. "Miss Ingham's real kind, she is."

"I wouldn't be for having much to do with yon' Mr. Crossland," struck in the old farmer, querulously; "I wouldn't take his game, nor nothin', I wouldn't."

"Why not?" asked Grace, in a tone of surprise.

"Don't you have nothin' to do wi' him," continued the old man.

Mrs. Turner hastened to change the subject, and began inquiring about Mrs. Hartley's health.

It was almost dark when the meal was over, and it seemed quite natural that George should offer to see Miss Hartley home.

CHAPTER III.

PLOWING.

“ Keep thy spirit pure
From worldly taint, by the repellent strength
Of virtue. Think on noble thoughts and deeds,
Ever. Count o’er the rosary of truth;
And practice precepts which are proven wise.
It matters not then what thou fearest.’

—BAILEY’S *Festus*.

IT was a clear, bright day in January. The pale wintry sunshine scarcely warmed the air, which was crisp and cold, although not frosty. There had been rain in the night, and in old Job Turner’s long four-acre field the smell of the damp earth as it was turned over by the plow was very pleasant. Ever since the break of day the patient horses and still more patient plowman had been at work, and now that it was close upon twelve o’clock the noonday rest would be very welcome.

More than once George Turner had looked longingly toward where he had thrown a rug over the stump of a tree in the hedge bottom. A book was tucked invitingly in the fold of the rug, and that more than the dinner-basket on the ground close by was what the young man wanted to get at. He was indeed a great reader; he dearly loved a good book, and this one he had fetched the day before from the library at Rushton and had not yet had time to read.

“I don’t mind plowing for once in a way,” he said to himself, “but it takes up so much time; and there is that

last invention of mine which wants a great deal of improving, and I meant to devote to-day entirely to it. Well, I hope father won't set his heart upon having any more plowing done while Ben is ill. But I'm glad I didn't refuse to come this time. I've pleased father, anyway, and that's something. Gee." This last admonition was to his horse.

Old Job had nearly made himself ill the evening before with fretting because the plowman, Ben's, illness threatened to prevent this field being plowed at once, and George had good-naturedly offered to do it. His mother had remonstrated, knowing that he had more important work on hand, and thinking that, as he was out of practice and was never very strong, he would not be quite equal to it. But Job had cried: "Tut, tut, Mary, it's skill, not strength, that is needed!" and then she had reluctantly given way. She had called her son herself early that morning, and had come down to pour out his breakfast coffee, and when she had afterward given him his dinner-basket—for the field was too far off for him to return for dinner—she had looked so regretful that he had made light of the matter, and had declared that a rest from hard mental work and plenty of exercise in the open air was just what he most needed.

And, indeed, at first, in spite of the hard work—for he had not plowed for a year or two—George enjoyed the sweetness of the morning and did not by any means dislike his task. But now he gladly turned aside to seek the shelter of the hedgeside, eat his dinner and enjoy his book. It was the first series of *Obiter Dicta*.

The sunlight played about the tired plowman as he read, and his horses fed contentedly beside him, while a few hungry crows flitted about the newly turned soil.

It was a strange book for a plowman to be reading, with such deep interest as, presently, made him oblivious of all his surroundings. Sometimes a smile flitted across his face, and again he would pause and half close the volume as he pondered over some new idea. He had drawn his rug over his shoulders and felt no cold, January though it was. And now he was reading about Coleridge, that "he was a man neglectful of restraint, irresponsive of the claims of those who had every claim upon him, willing to receive, slow to give," and how, in early manhood, he planned a "Pantisocracy" where all the virtues were to thrive, while the far nobler Charles Lamb "did something far more difficult; he played cribbage every night with his imbecile father, whose constant stream of querulous talk and fault-finding might well have goaded a stronger man into practicing and justifying neglect."

Lamb, knowing his friend's failings, wrote to him:

"Oh, my friend, cultivate the filial feelings! and let no man think himself released from the kind charities of relationship; these shall give him peace at the last; these are the best foundations for every species of benevolence. I rejoice to hear that you are reconciled with all your relations."

"I'm glad I came to do this plowing to-day," said George to himself, looking up from his book for a moment. "And that is why I like Miss Hartley so much; she seems to be always caring for the welfare of one or another of her relations. Now it is Jack, whose strength she is afraid will break down under his strenuous exertions—also for the good of his family—or, again, she is anxious to secure some pleasure for her young sister or some dainty for her mother. She never seems to think

of herself. Well, all the more reason why some one should think of her." And he smiled.

Presently he went on reading Lamb's exquisite "Dream Children." But when he reached the words, "It is bravery, truth and honor, loyalty and hard work, each man at his post, which makes this planet habitable," he closed the book, pulled off his rug, spoke cheerily to his horses, and betook himself once more to his plowing, and as he did so his thoughts were still with Grace Hartley.

He had seen a good deal of her since the day on which she first called to see his father. And who was so brave as she, so true, so honorable and loyal and hardworking, and always at her post of duty? Calling frequently for Jack, in his dogcart, when on his way to Rushton, and setting him down again at their door, had given him opportunities of, at all events, brief glimpses of her; and then Jack had sometimes persuaded him to stay to supper. And at other times he had talked much of his elder sister, whom he admired immensely and strove in many ways to emulate. And finding she did his father good by her bright little visits, Grace had often tried to return his kindness to her brother by going to see the old man. Sometimes on these occasions she sang for Job; George heard her once, and thought he had never heard a sweeter singer. Now and again she stayed to tea, and George had the great happiness of accompanying her home in the gloaming—that most enjoyable time for lovers. They then exchanged many little confidences, simple enough in their way, and yet revealing the inmost thoughts of each to each, and causing them to discover with sweet surprise that they possessed affinities of mind and soul altogether surprising and delightful.

And then to these two "this world seemed not the world it was before," and it was therefore no wonder that, as George pursued his humble occupation that wintry afternoon, his mind was full of thoughts of Grace.

Sometimes, as the hours wore on, he heard a distant whoop, or the shouts of men and boys, and the blast of a horn which resounded through the air; and then his horses would show signs of sympathy, and he would gaze round to espy, perhaps in the far distance, a pack of hounds sweeping in full cry across the countryside, followed by horsemen and horsewomen not a few. But he did not leave his work, as Ben would have done in his place, to go the length of the field or more to see the hunt that was going on.

As his task was just about drawing to an end, and the light of the short winter day was already waning, several hunting men and women leaped over, or broke down, a fence at one end of the field and came riding leisurely across it. On they came, nearer and nearer, the beautiful hunters stepping lightly over the freshly turned furrows, while their owners chatted together as they rode.

There was Kate Ingham, the squire's daughter, and by her side rode Gerald Hartley, who had borrowed a horse from Eustace Ingham. He and his mother and sisters had become very friendly with the Hall people, who were glad to find that the inmates of Ivy Cottage were gentlefolks, and that youth and beauty and culture combined to make them an acquisition to the neighborhood. Gerald was still living at home on his mother and sisters' slender resources, supplemented by Jack's hardly earned salary.

Frank Crossland, the gentleman-farmer who lived

with his mother in the large house standing just outside the village, was also there, riding by Eustace Ingham's side. He was rather small but well proportioned, handsome, too, though the expression of his face was not agreeable. He evidently thought a great deal about his dress and appearance. Eustace Ingham's fair, intellectual-looking face was a striking contrast, so sweet and refined was its expression. But he looked intensely bored, as the other talked to him on first one topic and then another. If he could have chosen his companion, the young squire, as he was often called, would far rather have been talking to the young man who was plowing.

Gerald himself had not disdained to accept Turner's friendly offer of a drive to Rushton, now and again, so that he knew him very well; but now, as they passed, and he saw his occupation, he did not appear to see his friendly nod. And as he turned to his companion, he made some slighting remark about humble tillers of the soil.

Kate Ingham purposely answered aloud: "Did not Burns plow? Was not Whittier at work in the fields when the postman brought him the news of his first published poetry? After that field-work becomes quite classical."

Hearing this, George took his cap off and waved it merrily; and the girl rode up to him and held out her hand, exclaiming: "You shame us all with your industry, Mr. Turner, when we are only killing time with sport. But, oh, we have had such a lovely run!"

"It has been such a nice day," said George, as much at ease as he stood there, in his shirt-sleeves, as if he were in her drawing-room.

Gerald, on the contrary, colored deeply as he rode on,

feeling conscious that his companion was ashamed of his rudeness, and fuming inwardly against the "churl" Turner, who had been the innocent cause of his making this mistake.

"I must look after my sister," remarked Ingham, going back to her, and thus escaping from Crossland, who immediately attached himself to Gerald.

"So Miss Ingham has deserted you for the plowman?" he said, insinuatingly. "Well, there's no accounting for tastes. Do you know him? I thought he seemed to recognize you."

"Ah! *well*," said Gerald, patronizingly, "they are neighbors; and I think my sister has taken a little notice of his poor old parents. It's just Grace's way; she loves to do that sort of thing. She visits them sometimes. Yes, I've spoken to him once or twice." He spoke impatiently, and now wheeled round his horse to look back at Kate Ingham.

The girl had dismounted, with her brother's help, and was now trying to plow, much to George Turner's amusement.

"The young Inghams have taken him up. He goes in for being cultured, you know; reads poetry and all that sort of thing," continued Crossland.

"Quite a mistake, quite a mistake," said Gerald, with the air of a man of the world. "Keep people in their places, I say; don't turn their heads."

"Oh, the mischief is already done with Turner," sneered Crossland. "He's got a soul quite above farming, I can assure you. Thinks a mighty lot of himself."

"Of course," said Gerald; "they always do when they get educated a little above their position."

Crossland next inquired about Gerald's sisters. He

had met them once or twice and been much struck with their beauty. But Gerald answered him rather shortly, and suggested that they should return to the others.

As they rode up to them Kate Ingham exclaimed merrily: "Mr. Hartley, I can't do it; I can't plow. Put me up, Eustace; I won't try any longer."

In two minutes they were all riding away again, laughing and chatting as before, and George was alone, turning the last furrow before leaving off work.

One little star came out and glimmered down upon him; far off in the distance he could hear the noise of the horse's hoofs growing less and of other laborers taking home their tired horses. A dog barked, here and there, and, now and again, the sound of some vehicle passing along the road was to be heard.

George's thoughts followed those who had just been in the field. How different their lot was from his own! It seemed as if their path through life would be so much easier, and yet he would not change places with any one of them. Poor he might be. It was true the farm was deteriorating in value, so that in regard to his heritage he would probably be even poorer in the future. But what of that? He liked work, and, if poor, he would have a motive for work which would spur him on to greater efforts. At least he would do his best to smooth his mother's declining years. She should feel no pinch of poverty while he lived—and then there was Grace. Full of pleasant thoughts about her, and feeling satisfied that he had done a good day's work, he set off homeward, riding one of his horses because he was tired.

As he entered the village Grace and Maude Hartley passed him. The former looked surprised as she bowed, but would have stopped to speak to him if her sister had

not hurried her on. It was plain the younger girl did not wish to be seen talking to him just then; and it was too dark for him to see the reluctance with which Grace complied with her wishes.

George felt disappointed. Still, no doubt he would see her again soon.

The clatter of a horse's hoofs upon the stony village street made him look round. It was Crossland, who had been staying a little at the Hall, having afternoon tea with the Inghams. He did not notice George as he passed. But when, a few minutes after, George went by Ivy Cottage he saw a small boy holding Crossland's horse outside, and knew that he must be paying a friendly visit there as well.

George hoped that he would not become too intimate with the Hartleys.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE SPRINGTIME.

"In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love."

—TENNYSON. *Locksley Hall.*

"Love wakes men, once a lifetime each,
They lift their heavy lids, and look;
And lo! what one sweet page can teach,
They read with joy, then shut the book.

"And some give thanks, and some blaspheme,
And most forget; but either way,
That and the child's unheeded dream
Is all the light of all their day."

—COVENTRY PATMORE.

ONE morning, in the following month, Grace came into the dining-room from the kitchen, where she had been

making jelly for her mother, who seemed more delicate than usual, to find Gerald exclaiming: "But, mother, it's preposterous! I must have some money; I say I must! Do you mean to tell me we are penniless?"

"Well, no, dear, not quite that; but Grace and I are so anxious to keep out of debt, and—" The poor lady hesitated.

"Gerald," exclaimed Grace, warningly, as she entered, "remember what Dr. Weston said."

Their old family physician had said to them, more than once, that worry of any kind might prove fatal to their mother, who had heart disease.

"Confound it!" said Gerald, turning on her, "what is a man to do when he is in a fix like mine? I owe five pounds; only five pounds," he repeated, mentioning the sum as contemptuously as if it were five farthings, "to that little cad of a tailor at Rushton, and the man has the impudence to come over here for it, though I expressly told him that I would call and pay him some day when I was passing."

"My dear, is the man here, in the house, dunning us?" exclaimed his mother, in accents of utmost distress.

"He won't be here long, mother, dear," said Grace. "I have a little money; I will send him away. But, Gerald," and she spoke very gravely, "this must not occur again."

She left the room, and Mrs. Hartley began to cry hysterically. Maude, coming in, scolded Gerald and soothed her mother by turns.

Grace took the man his money; it was all she had. She returned to her room very thoughtful. It was quite impossible that they could live and maintain Gerald, as he had insisted upon being maintained, on their little in-

come. Something must be done. It was not enough for Jack to work. She must work, too. She had already tried to get pupils, but teachers of all kinds were plentiful at Rushton, and in the village there were only poor children who went to the national school.

"I must not be ashamed to work with my hands," said the girl to herself, after a long meditation. "George Turner is not, and why should I be? He is far cleverer than I, yet he plows. I cannot plow; I can only sew."

There and then she formed a resolution, which enabled her, when she carried it into practice, to occasionally have the great pleasure of placing much needed money in her mother's hands.

But the occupation she chose left her scanty leisure; that, however, seemed more enjoyable than it had ever been. Truly life is full of compensations.

Yet, with all her hard work, Grace did not neglect her friends, the Turners, and many a talk with George sent her back to her task strengthened and encouraged to pursue it with renewed energy.

Maude watched the growing intimacy between her sister and the young farmer with anything but pleasure. What would be the end of it all? Grace was no flirt. She was always in earnest when she pursued any line of conduct. Maude knew that she was perfectly aware what she was doing. She had never had such pleasure in the society of any young man before, and she had never shown one so much favor.

"I declare, Grace," said Maude, one afternoon, when she found her sister, in one of her rare intervals of leisure, reading a book of Turner's, "you are going too far with Mr. Turner! How can you let him lend you books?"

"Why should I not?" asked Grace, raising her pretty

eyebrows in surprise. "I think I saw you reading a book of young Mr. Ingham's the other day."

"That was different," exclaimed Maude; "young Mr. Ingham is our equal and George Turner is not."

"Indeed!" said Grace; and, turning again to her book, he went on reading, though with a slight flush on her cheeks.

"Grace, listen to me," said Maude, angrily. "You have no pride, no family spirit, or you would not think of—"

"Maude, I will hear no more of this," said Grace, in a tone which showed Maude that she must not venture to say any more, for, gentle and sweet-tempered as Grace was, she could be very indignant when unwisely interfered with.

As for George Turner, it was a very trying time for him. The more he grew to love Grace the more he felt dismayed at the poverty which before had not much troubled him. He was in no position to propose to any girl, much less to one so delicately bred and with such cultured tastes as Grace. The farm was going down, the land deteriorating in value. He had almost no capital to spend on it, an insufficient number of men to work it, very little stock, and that not of the best-paying kind. People were timid about trying his inventions. If he were to make Grace an offer, and if—oh, blissful thought!—she were to accept him, they would have to wait perhaps many years before they could marry. If he were free to go to other parts, and take an agency of some kind, then things might be better for them; but he felt that he could not do that while his parents lived. He was their only child. They clung to the land, to the house in which they had lived for almost half a century together, and in which Job's ancestors had lived for gen-

erations; it would break their hearts to take them away. And they could not keep the place going at all without his help. So George told himself, again and again, that he must not propose to his beloved. And yet he could not bring himself to avoid her sweet presence; nay, he could not refrain from seeking it again and again.

One fine afternoon, in the early part of April, Grace found time to go to one of the nearest meadows to seek for violets, as her mother had expressed a great wish to have some, and the Turners had told her that the earliest ones were to be found there under a sheltered hedgeside.

The fresh, sweet air was delightful after many hours spent indoors; but the girl searched badly, for her thoughts were full of George. She had been dreaming about him, and she could not remember any of her dream except that his beautiful brown eyes had been looking appealingly at her.

And now, all at once, he stood before her, his riding-whip in hand, his patient horse looking calmly at them from the field-gate, where he had left him while he stepped softly across the grass, and he was pointing silently to where three little violets hung their modest heads beneath an overspreading leaf.

"Oh, thank you!" said Grace, stooping over the flowers to hide her confusion at his sudden appearance; "they are the first I have found. They are most lovely."

"You are most lovely," he said, with sudden vehemence, forgetting all prudential resolutions in that moment of intense feeling, as his eyes rested with delight on her beautiful face and the graceful lines of her tall figure.

"Mr. Turner," she began, confusedly.

He took her hands and tried to look into her blushing face. "Oh, Grace," he said, I must speak. I can keep

silence no longer." And then he told her what she was to him and how he loved her with all his soul; and the girl trembled as she listened, and could not say a word for very joy, and dared not raise her drooping eyelids lest he should read the answer there too plainly.

But her silence alarmed George. Surely he had not been mistaken! The idea was almost more than he could bear.

"Oh, Grace, Grace! why did you come here?" he cried. "Why did you cross my path to steal away my peace? Before you came I was content, but now you have filled me with unavailing longings. Why did you come? Are you a second Lady Clara Vere de Vere? Did you come to steal away my country heart for pastime?"

"George!" The girl stopped him in a tone of the tenderest reproach, while she looked up at him through eyes which shone with love's own light.

"My darling!" he cried, rapturously, folding her in his arms in the sweet, sacred silence of that secluded spot, where Nature herself seemed to sympathize with their joy.

When they were a little calmer, and, having left the violets, were walking down the field together, George spoke of the hesitation he had in telling her of his love because he was so poor; it seemed better to wait until he had something definite to offer.

"Poor, George, dearest?" replied Grace, with a smile, "then we are well matched, for I am poor enough."

"I have to do quite humble work," he said, ruefully.

"And I," she interrupted, "I do *very* humble work."

"You know, dearest, you seemed so far above me," he went on, "some people might say you were going to marry a plowman."

"People wouldn't say that to me," she retorted, stoutly. "Besides, let people say what they like; it isn't a man's work but the spirit in which he does it that shows what he really is," and she looked proudly at him. "And, if people knew everything, they might say that I was only—a—"

"Only a what, dearest?" said George, looking at her with an air of surprised amusement.

"Oh, well, never mind now; that's a secret. But, at any rate, it's something quite as bad as being a plowman."

"You don't seem ashamed of it, anyway," said George, with a smile.

"Ashamed! Not a bit of it."

"Sometimes," said George, "I was quite afraid to hope, when I thought of your grand relations—Lord Granton—"

"Lord Granton's grandfather was only a poor miner when he began his career. And your ancestors have owned their own land and been honest yeoman-farmers for over three hundred years; your father told me so. I don't suppose any of your ancestors were hanged?"

"Hanged!" cried George, in astonishment. "No, but you don't mean to say that any of yours—"

"Well, no," said she, interrupting him and shaking her head sagely. "I can't say that they were hanged exactly, but poor papa used to say that two or three of them, at least, ought to have been hanged. He was very plain-spoken at times. Perhaps you will begin to be ashamed of me now?" and she looked archly at him.

George's answer need not be repeated. They had reached the gate now, and Grace patted the patient horse, and smiled into the big, mild eyes, which seemed to ask her why she had detained his master so long.

"You see," said George, "I ought not to have spoken yet until I got on, but how could I wait? When—

" 'We two stood there, with never a third,
But each by each, as each knew well;
The sights we saw and the sounds we heard,
The lights and the shades made up a spell
Till the trouble grew and stirred.

" 'Oh, the little more, and how much it is!
And the little less, and what worlds away!
After all, it was a great risk—
To gain a lover and lose a friend.' "

Then Grace answered, smiling, by quoting from the same exquisite idyll—

" 'Had she willed it, still had stood the screen
So slight, so sure, 'twixt my love and her.'

"Yes, it was so, George, and you can't deny it. I am equally to blame with you for what has happened. But, oh! I would not have it otherwise."

"Nor I," he said, rapturously.

And now they were walking along the lane toward Ivy Cottage, George with his bridle over his arm and the horse stepping gently along behind them, as if in full sympathy with their happiness.

"I'm afraid we shall have to wait until I can get an agency somewhere near," said George, "for while my father and mother live I must manage their farm as well. And I don't think any one is likely to want an agent about here for some time; that is the worst of it."

"Well, we can wait," said Grace. "You know I cannot leave my mother while she is so delicate, and I sometimes fear she will never be stronger," and she sighed.

"Do you think it will vex her to be told about this?" asked George, doubtfully.

"Not if it is told her properly, as I shall tell it," said Grace; "but I think for her sake it would be better not to let everybody know about it at present, or others might put it in a less desirable light, and then she might worry." Grace was thinking how vexed Maude and Gerald would be, especially the latter, and she did not wish them to be able to trouble their mother with their comments.

"Very well, then, at present only your mother and my parents shall know," said George. "My father and mother won't tell any one if I ask them not to do so. They see very few people, so they will not have much temptation to speak of the matter."

"And I know it will be all right with mother," said Grace, brightly. "The others will be out this evening, but I am going to stay at home with her. Perhaps, George, if you were to come in about nine o'clock?"

"I will, I will," he said, delightedly.

Then they parted. But they did not meet that evening. Instead, George received a sorrowful little note from Grace, saying that in spite of her anticipations to the contrary, she had been quite unable to get her mother to see the matter as they had hoped she would see it. Mrs. Hartley, it seemed, had views of her own about her daughters' marriage. She had married a rich man herself, and she would never consent to their marrying poor men. She positively refused to see George, and had become so ill at the thought of his marrying Grace that the latter had been obliged to promise her that she would never become engaged to him without her consent.

"But, oh, I love you," wrote poor Grace, "and I thank

you for your love. I shall never, never marry any one else."

"She never shall," said George to himself, as he read this, and there was a brave light in his eyes as he sat down and wrote his regret that Mrs. Hartley would not consent to their engagement now, and also his determination to work hard and win for her daughter a home and an income which even she would not despise.

In a postscript he added: "Fortunately I have not told my parents. Do not fear to come and see them as before, for I will not speak of this, and if we both act as usual no one need know anything about it."

CHAPTER V.

GRACE'S OCCUPATION.

"Oh, small beginnings, ye are great and strong,
Based on a faithful heart and weariless brain.
Ye build the future fair, ye conquer wrong,
Ye earn the crown, and wear it not in vain."

—J. RUSSELL LOWELL.

"I WONDER what Grace's perpetual sewing means?" said Maude to herself, one fine afternoon, when Grace had gone to see the Turners. "Stitch! stitch! stitch! she is forever stitching! I'm sure it will be the 'Song of the Shirt' over again, only, as far as I can make out, it is always some part of a dress she is sewing. And I never see her with a new dress on. I'm sure she wears all hers until they are quite, quite shabby. And then she locks herself up in her room for hours together at a time.

"What does it all mean? And how does she get those nice little sums of money which she always contrives to let mother have just when money is most needed? She must earn it in some way by her constant sewing. I'll have a look at her room while she is out."

The girl hurried upstairs full of serious intention. Grace was working very hard. Grace was earning money. How did she do it? It was clearly necessary that Maude should know what was going on.

Her sister's little bedroom was scrupulously neat and tidy; not a thing was out of its place. But the carpet! Maude went down on her knees to examine it. Minute shreds of lining, ends of cotton, tiny scraps of silk; here a hook there an eye, an end of tape, a bit of braid, a whole quarter of a yard of lining under the bed valance, a reel of silk twist under the chest of drawers.

"She might be a dressmaker!" exclaimed Maude. Then, rising from her knees, she looked on the table. Her sister's workbox was locked. There was a pair of large "cutting-out" scissors beside the small hand sewing machine, which had been Grace's property for two or three years; in fact, ever since she had, in their richer days, got her mother's maid, a skilled dressmaker, to teach her the art and mystery of dressmaking.

A copy of an illustrated journal upon the table next attracted Maude's attention. "Fashions!" she exclaimed, opening it and seeing various styles of gowns on the usual wasp-waist figures and doll-faced maidens that fashion-plate artists love to depict. "Well," said Maude to herself, "Grace studying the fashions! This is something new!"

She looked round the room to see if there were anything else unusual. Yes, the key was in the lock of

Grace's wardrobe. *That* was an unusual circumstance. She had often wondered why her sister always kept her wardrobe locked and never left the key about. The little mystery had perplexed her in idle moments. Now, at last, she could satisfy her curiosity. Going quickly to the wardrobe, she opened the door and saw at once two or three partly made gowns, two bodices without sleeves, two half-finished dress-skirts, and a child's frock. On the shelf above were two or three rather worn bodices, and some letters half thrust into their envelopes.

Maude gave a sigh of dismay. This, then, was what it meant. Her sister, a Hartley, half-cousin to Lord Gran-ton, was earning her living by dressmaking!

But how had she been able to do it so quietly? Maude had never seen any stranger lady come; neither had any carriage waited at their gate while its mistress submitted to be "tried on." How did Grace get her customers?

A copy of the *Lady's Advertiser and Mart*, at the bottom of the wardrobe, next attracted Maude's attention. Taking it up, she examined it carefully. At the end there were several advertisements—servants wanted, servants wanting places, governesses and tutors seeking pupils, literary people wanting amanuensises, typewriters needing work at so much a thousand words, shorthand and typewriting clerks in need of situations. Dress-makers—ah! what was this? Her eye rested on the following advertisement:

"Ladies can have their gowns well and fashionably made for six and eleven pence, by sending material, with a well-fitting bodice, and the length of skirt, back and front, to G., Ivy Cottage, Marburn, Rushton, Kent."

This, then, was how Grace got her employers and

earned the money which, alas! was only too often handed over eventually to Gerald for his cigars and all the other little luxuries—necessaries, he called them—which he so often pathetically declared he could not live without.

Did her mother know? Maude seized the paper and set off with it to her mother's room, intending to show it to her. When she had reached her door, however, she began to have misgivings as to the kindness of the act. If her mother did not know how Grace employed her time, and by what means she obtained her customers, it would give her pain to discover it. If she knew, what was the use of telling her? Besides, it was Grace's secret; would it not be mean to reveal it without her leave?

Slowly Maude returned to Grace's room; but there was a frown upon her pretty face as she did so. If the Inghams got to know, what would they think? The squire would say that it was only what he expected, Eustace would be intensely surprised; she could not bear to think of that. How Grace would lower them all in his eyes. It was too bad of her. Sooner or later everybody would find out about it—and then, well, she, for one, did not relish the thought of being looked upon as a dressmaker's sister. How wild Gerald would be! But the thought of him brought Maude to a more reasonable state of mind. Was it not his doing that the little household was so often sorely pinched for money? They had just enough to live upon, in their quiet, economical way, if they had not him to maintain and his expenses to pay. Why did he not get some work to do? Oh, it was very wrong of him to refuse the clerkship their friend, Mr. Lancaster, had offered him. His pride, his conduct had driven poor Grace to this. Anything, she thought, was

better than seeing their mother distressed for want of money. After all, it was very good of Grace. And how kind of her to keep the matter secret, lest they should be grieved. How hard she must have worked. She had looked very pale lately. This was evidently the reason.

"And she never asked me to help her," said Maude to herself. "Perhaps she thought I should not like it. Well, I don't, but all the same if she does it I must help her. What a lazy life I've been leading while she was toiling in this way."

In a sudden fit of penitence Maude took up some of the unfinished work, and sitting down at the table began to sew with feverish haste, as if to make up for lost time. Her face was flushed, partly with anger, a little with shame, and partly also with a praiseworthy determination to be a little more like Grace.

"Why, Maude?" exclaimed the latter, coming in, after an hour's absence, and finding her thus employed, "what are you doing?"

Maude looked up smilingly. "Oh, Grace!" she said, "I've found out all your secret, and I'm very angry—that is, I admire you very much, but I think it's a shame; and I think it's beautiful, and yet so foolish, and still so sensible, and—"

"You dear little Irishwoman!" cried Grace, interrupting her by giving her a kiss, "I'm sure you must not argue any more about it, for you talk the veriest rubbish. Oh, what a nice lot you have done!—that was such a tedious piece of work. Why, we shall get on twice as fast if you help me sometimes."

Throwing off her hat and jacket and bathing her face and hands was the work of a few moments. Then Grace seated herself at her machine, and with a most business-

like air set to work at another part of the same gown Maude was sewing. For a little time the sisters worked in silence, then Maude exclaimed angrily: "I shall tell Mr. Gerald what we are driven to do."

"I have told him," said Grace, quietly.

"Have you? When? He never told me."

"I told him yesterday, when he wanted more money from mother."

"What did he say?" asked Maude, breathlessly.

"He begged me to keep the matter secret. Spoke of it as a temporary affair; was very vexed, of course, and lamented our hard fate."

"And did it not lead him to do anything himself?" demanded Maude.

"Yes, he did do something, unfortunately." Grace's tone was full of pain. "He went straight to his room and wrote to Lord Granton. I did not see his letter; I'm afraid, though, that he made a strong appeal to him for help."

"I wonder how it is that Gerald is ashamed to work—at the only things within his reach—and yet is not ashamed to beg or borrow?"

"Borrow? Does he borrow?" asked Grace, looking more dismayed still.

Maude burst into tears. "Yes," she sobbed, at length; "isn't it a shame? He borrowed of—of Mr. Ingham."

"Young Mr. Ingham?"

"Yes. It was the day of the last hunt. I know Gerald had no money in the morning, and I saw Mr. Ingham pass him some later in the day. And Gerald just said, 'Awfully obliged,' in his careless way, as if it was a matter of the greatest indifference."

Grace sighed.

"I do feel so ashamed, so vexed," said Maude. "I think of it every time I meet Eus—I mean Mr. Ingham. I'd rather he had borrowed of any one else," she added, naively.

"I hope you scolded Gerald well."

"I did. I said the very next time he did such a thing I should tell *you*."

Grace was silent. It was not nice to be a sort of family policeman. Gerald stood in more awe of her than of any one, but it hurt the gentle girl inexpressibly to have to pain him.

"Oh, Gracie!" sighed Maude, "how wretched it is to be poor! What will the Inghams think when they know about this?" and she pointed to the gown they were making.

"Kate knows," replied Grace.

"Knows?" cried Maude, in astonishment.

"Yes," replied Grace, smiling.

"Why, how could she find out? Does Gerald know that she knows?"

"No, not yet."

"How did she find out?" repeated Maude.

"Through this," answered Grace, pointing to the advertisement. "She came here with the journal in her hand, and sat down beside me, threw her arms round me and was so sweet—just like herself—she wanted me to make her a dress and charge *double* for it, and I made her one—that pretty white one she wore yesterday—and she was so pleased, she kissed me for making it so pretty. And she says she shall never give that dress away, but shall keep it always in remembrance of me."

Maude listened to this in amazement. Kate knew all. Yet she did not despise Grace for her lowly occupation.

Nay, she thought all the more highly of her for it. They were better friends than ever.

Grace smiled at her surprise, but said nothing, and for some time the click, click of the sewing machine was the only sound to be heard in the little room.

Suddenly Maude asked: "Does mother know?"

"Well, no; I was rather afraid it would disturb her," replied Grace. "I don't think she will be at all likely to see the journal. Kate and I thought it better not to tell her. We had a long talk about it. Mother knows I earn money in some way, but I have begged her to let me keep my little secret. I rather think, from something she said, that she imagines I write poems. Just fancy! and I could not write a line. I always was a dunce."

"I think," said Maude, rising and caressing her lovingly, "I think you're just a *living poem*, Grace."

And then she sat down again and began to sew.

CHAPTER VI.

AN UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL.

"Right life for me is life that wends
By lowly ways to lofty ends."

—COVENTRY PATMORE.

It was one evening in early June, and the inmates of Ivy Cottage were assembled in their little dining-room, ready to sit down to supper as soon as Jane, their young maid, should announce that the meal was ready for them. During her lengthy preparations—for she was not

one of the swiftest—their appetites had ample time for improving. Grace would have helped, but she was exceedingly busy with some needlework which she had promised to send away on the morrow. Grace's interminable needlework was a mystery to her brothers.

"Hush!" cried Mrs. Hartley, suddenly, to Jack and Maude, who were in the midst of a rather noisy but wholly good-natured dispute, "there is a ring at the bell. Jane, do you hear?"

Jane withdrew to answer the bell, leaving, as was her frequent custom, the door open behind her. This time no one felt inclined to find fault about that. They all wanted to know who their visitor was. Visitors after nine o'clock were uncommonly rare.

They heard Jane open the door. Then a man's voice asked: "Is Mrs. Hartley in?"

"Yes, she's in." Then followed an interval of silence. Jane was evidently not inclined to ask the visitor in. He however, seemed desirous of entering without any further encouragement.

"Is—is Mrs. Hartley engaged?" he inquired, at length.

"No; she ain't now, but she will be when supper's ready."

"Isn't that just like Jane?" said Maude, in a low tone, to Jack, who was manfully trying to stifle a laugh. Gerald looked furious; he was terribly ashamed of poor Jane. Mrs. Hartley's face might have been taken for a martyr's.

"Oh, she'll be engaged soon, eh?" asked the stranger, in an evidently amused tone of voice. "Then I'd better come in now. Will you go and say Mr. John Hartley, from America, would like to see her?"

"Your Uncle John, from America!" murmured Mrs.

Hartley, in a low, awestruck tone. "What shall we do?"

Before any reply could be made to that question Jane had entered the room, closely followed by the visitor.

"Mr. John Hartley, mum, wants— Oh, here he be!" and Jane stepped back.

"Ah! Maria," said Mr. Hartley, as he came forward holding out his hand, "how-d'y'-do? Hope I haven't taken you by surprise?"

"How are you, John?" replied Mrs. Hartley, faintly, just touching the proffered hand. "It is a little surprise, certainly, to see you again after so many years."

"You're quite sure it's me? Why, of course you're sure of that—fool I am," and he hastily corrected himself. "But I mean you're quite sure I'm John—John Hartley, who went off to America some twenty-three years ago?"

"Yes," Mrs. Hartley answered, looking at him with mingled feelings. He had gone abroad when she had only been a short time married, but she had seen him several times. He was a plain likeness, she had thought, of her husband, his younger brother. "You are still like poor Gerald," she said, wiping away a tear, for the sight of him had awakened memories of the beloved dead.

In the meantime, all her children had been mentally discovering this resemblance to their father in the stranger. And they, too, were convinced that it must be indeed their uncle who had so unexpectedly appeared in their midst. Two of them at least, however, were undecided as to whether his arrival was to be considered a matter for rejoicing.

He was a middle-aged, rather short and spare man, clean shaven and slightly gray. Although plain-looking

he had a very pleasant expression of countenance, while the merry twinkle which now and then darted into his blue eyes—his one beauty—with the smile that lighted up his bronzed face, showed that he was not altogether devoid of good spirits, and perhaps a sense of humor.

From his appearance, however, it was hard to tell whether his cheerfulness was justified by the state of his circumstances. His outward adorning was quite guiltless of anything in the shape of jewelry, except a simple silver chain attached to an equally simple silver watch. His clothes were neither new nor fashionably cut; without being strictly shabby, they showed many signs of having been worn for a considerable length of time. His linen, so far as it was visible, seemed, if somewhat frayed, at least spotlessly clean. On the whole, it was impossible to tell from his outer man whether Mr. John Hartley was a relation to be ashamed or proud of. As Gerald said to himself, he might be anything, millionaire, or next door to a pauper. Hence the young man's attitude toward him was that of a calm, dispassionate inquirer after truth.

"We were just sitting down to supper, John," hazarded Mrs. Hartley, after she had introduced her children to him, "perhaps you will join us? But I am afraid we haven't got very much to offer you to-night."

"Oh, pray, Maria, don't make any excuses," hastily replied her brother-in-law. "I see the roast beef of old England," and he looked significantly at the table, "and a man who isn't satisfied with that deserves to starve. And, out in the West, I've gone supperless to bed many a time—ay, and waited till supper-time for my breakfast, too."

Mrs. Hartley was extremely thankful that Jane was

just leaving the room. Such confessions as these she feared would hardly tend to increase her respect for the family. And Jane was quicker with her tongue than her hands.

"How did you find us here?" she asked, wishing to change the subject.

"Oh, well, you know, I went to the old place. And I was very much taken aback to find it inhabited by other people. But I soon found plenty of folk who knew me and who saddened me still more by telling me of poor Gerald's death and the break down of your fortunes. Then I learned that you had come here, and I made up my mind I would follow you and see if there was anything I could do?"

"Thank you," said Mrs. Hartley. She did not speak with enthusiasm, for she saw, or thought she saw, more and more plainly, that the proverbial ill luck still pursued the fortunes of her poor brother-in-law.

At last, being anxious to find out, if not his past history, at least his present circumstances, she remarked tentatively: "You haven't told us yet what profession you—you entered in America." She put it as politely as she could.

"Profession, my dear Maria?" he replied, calmly, just as the little maid re-entered with the cheese. "Let me consider. Oh, yes, I think the first regular profession I practiced was that of cowboy. You know I could ride. But of course I did many odd jobs, so to speak, before I rose to that." He looked round. Maude was making some excuses to send Jane out of the room. He thought she had not very good manners to talk and interrupt him when he was speaking. But began again: "I got tired of that in about a year, and then settled down as a miner in

Nevada. Ah! that was a rough time," and he solemnly shook his head.

"And was mining profitable?" inquired Gerald, with a seemingly careless air.

John Hartley cast a keen glance at him with his blue eyes; then he answered: "Well, it is a risky business; you may make money, or you may not. I've made money at mining—ay, and lost it, too. But I think I saved more money at stage-driving."

"Oh! that was another profession, then?" asked Maude, somewhat quizzically.

"Yes, my dear, yes," said her uncle, laughing, "and fiddling was another, and storekeeping another."

"You seem to have been Jack of all trades," said Gerald, somewhat brusquely. He was disgusted at his uncle's confession. For a Hartley to have been by turns cowboy, miner, stage-driver, fiddler, etc., and all that, apparently, with the same want of success! The pill was not even gilded.

"Yes," replied his uncle, not at all abashed, "Jack of all trades—and master of none, perhaps you might add."

"Well, I'm sure after so many changes you must be quite ready for a little rest," said Grace, with a pleasant smile. She was prepared to welcome her uncle, whatever his position might be; for had he not a look of her dead father? For his sake she would love him; she knew he had always been fond of poor Jack, as he used to call him on the rare occasions when he was named. And he had insisted upon calling his second son after him.

"There has always been a Jack and a Gerald in our family," he said; so, at least, her mother had once told her.

"Rest, my dear? No, I can't say that exactly; but I thought I should like to see the old country once again.

And then, although I have many friends in America, blood is thicker than water. But I didn't expect to find your father gone." And here a suspicious dimness came into Uncle Jack's eyes.

There was a slight pause, then he asked abruptly, turning to his elder nephew: "And now what are you doing, Gerald? You are the head of the family now."

Gerald remained silent. He resented the question and the manner in which it was put. Besides, Lord Granton had not replied to his application for help, and as he had expected him to write at once and offer him some suitable—i.e., gentlemanly and easily worked—appointment, he felt sore on the subject.

"Poor Gerald, you know, John, was going into the army."

"Ah! there generally was one Hartley in the army," replied Uncle Jack.

"Yes, he was going to keep up the family tradition; but, of course, when his father died, and we found ourselves so very badly off, that was out of the question."

"Yes; so Gerald went in for something else?"

"Well, not exactly, but the poor boy is waiting for something to turn up. And he is a great comfort to us here," and Mrs. Hartley looked fondly at her elder son.

"Oh, yes, I see!" replied Uncle Jack, dryly. That was a perfectly safe remark to make.

There was a short silence. Gerald looked uncomfortable. Uncle Jack turned to the youth who had been called after him.

"And are *you* waiting for something to turn up, too?" he asked, with an inquiring look.

"No, I've found something to do," answered his nephew.

"Yes," said his mother, plaintively, "the poor boy found some work connected with a newspaper at Rush-ton. It is not what I like, of course," she went on, in a querulous tone, "and indeed none of our family ever had to do such a task before. But what was he to do?"

Her brother-in-law felt rather amused at her indiscriminate pity for both her sons. One was a "poor boy" because he couldn't find work, the other a "poor boy"—that is, one to be pitied—because he had found it.

"So Jack is connected with the press, is he? Well, the press is a great power in America, at any rate, and I've no doubt it is here, too, if not to the same extent. But our people out there are great newspaper readers."

"Well, I think he might have found something better to do," said Gerald, sulkily, "than scribbling for a low Radical paper like the *Rushton and Packlington Advertiser*."

"Perhaps he is a Radical," said his uncle, laughingly, with an inquiring glance at Jack. It was plain Radicalism was no great sin in his eyes.

"No, a reporter can't afford to have any politics, uncle," said Jack; "he's quite enough to do with reporting other people's opinions. If ever I rise to be a sub-editor I shall have to express some political opinions."

"Oh, Jack, never mind politics now," interrupted Grace, hastily, for she feared Gerald and he might have some disagreement on a subject generally fruitful in little scenes. For Jack was impulsive and enthusiastic in his profession of Liberal principles, while Gerald was a devout Tory.

"I hope you have brought a bag, or something with you, Uncle John," she added, turning to him. "We have a room quite ready."

"No, thank you, my dear. I have ordered a bed at the little inn. But if you could do with me for a few days, Maria—till—till I can look round, I certainly shan't say no."

"Of course, John, we shall be very pleased to have you as long as you like," said Mrs. Hartley, adding in a fretful tone, "but our accommodation is far different now from what it was when poor dear George was alive."

"Oh, never mind the accommodation," cried her brother-in-law, cheerily. "With a hearty welcome one can put up with anything. And I am sure you look most comfortable indeed; I shan't have to rough it very much."

"Well, I am sure we can give you the hearty welcome, Uncle Jack," said his younger nephew, "and I shall look forward to hearing some of your real 'roughing experiences' out in the West."

"Very well, my lad, then you shall hear them, only don't let me lead you into wishing for a roving life. And now I'll say good-night. And, mind, I shall be back for breakfast."

CHAPTER VII.

NAILING IVY.

“Will makes the man; who carves not time and chance
To his own bidding, until seeming ill.
Concur his cherished promise to fulfill,
Has yet to learn that his inheritance
Lies in himself.” —LEWIS MORRIS.

“GRACE, I am surprised at you,” began Gerald, furiously, as soon as the front door had closed on their uncle. “The very idea of saying we should be glad to welcome him here! And didn’t you see how he jumped at the idea? Good heavens! we may have him quartered on us for life. You really have no consideration.”

“Well, I think it was the least we could do,” replied Grace, quietly. “Remember, he is father’s only brother.”

“You may be sure he won’t let us forget that,” said Maude, bitterly. “That’s the worst of having relations, especially poor ones. Because they happen to be related to you, they fancy they can take all sorts of liberties.”

“My dear,” interposed her mother, cautiously, “you don’t know that he is poor; he looks quite respectable.”

“Looks respectable, mother! How can you say so?” retorted Gerald, angrily. “Why, those clothes must have been made years ago in the backwoods! Did you ever see such clothes? And I should fancy the washer-woman must be afraid of washing his shirt and collars. Why, the edge of his collar was worn as thin as this knife.”

“Yes, and the idea of telling us his low experiences be-

fore Jane!" cried Maude. "Why, it will be all over the place! Let me see, what was he first, or last? Oh, a cowboy! Well, it's a pity we haven't some cows! He might help us milking them."

"My dear Maude," said Jack, laughing, "a cowboy doesn't milk cows. Didn't you see them at Buffalo Bill's? They are quite swells. They drive cattle."

"Do they?" returned Maude, calmly. "Well, then, in that case we may find him setting up as a drover, like old Irish Bob."

"I thought he had been a stage—stage-coach driver," said Mrs. Hartley.

"Oh, that was when he failed as a cowboy," said Gerald.

"Then I should propose we tell him that there is a vacancy at the Golden Lion, in Rushton, for a bus-driver. I saw it in the paper this morning," went on Maude, angrily.

"Well, I like him," said Jack, stoutly, "and you may find he won't want our help, or welcome, either; you seem to take it for granted that he is poor."

"My dear Jack," replied Gerald, with an air of superior wisdom, "did you ever hear of rich relations taking the trouble to look up their poor friends? I never did—out of a novel, that is."

"If he is poor," said Grace, "I think that is all the more reason why we should be kind to him. Rich people can always take care of themselves, and even buy kindness, or something very like it."

"Bravo, Grace!" cried Jack, "stick up for Uncle Jack, be he rich or poor."

"Oh, well, if you like to have your poor relations sponging on you for goodness knows how long, I don't.

And I shall soon let him know my opinion!" said Gerald, crossly.

Jack was going to retort that Uncle Jack wouldn't be the only one that sponged on his relations, but an appealing look from Grace, who was afraid he might say something unpleasant for Gerald's ears, made him keep silence. He was not sorry, on glancing at his watch, to find it was his usual time for retiring. His plan was to act upon the proverb, "Early to bed and early to rise," for he liked to feel fresh for his day's work at Rushton.

"I am sorry, for Jack's sake, that uncle has found us out," said Gerald, as soon as his brother had disappeared; "he will be putting all kinds of low ideas into the boy's head"—Gerald was only twenty-five himself—"and, goodness knows, he hasn't much sense of dignity as it is."

"Gerald, my love," murmured his mother, "you are a little hard on your brother. I really don't know what we should do if he gave up his work on the paper."

"Oh! I don't mean that," replied Gerald, hastily; "beggars can't always be choosers, and I suppose he likes the work. There's no accounting for tastes. But I'm afraid he may strengthen Jack's low Radical opinions. In America they seem to have no respect for rank or birth; one man is as good as another, that's their idea. And Jack doesn't want any encouragement in that way."

"No; I'm afraid he has little of the Hartley spirit," sighed his mother. "He seems to care very little for belonging to one of the oldest families in England—a younger branch, of course."

"Well, I wish we had a little more of the Hartley money," cried Maude. "They say Lord Granton is simply rolling in it. Suppose we pay him a surprise visit?"

"Well, I've no doubt Lord Granton would remember that we are Hartleys, too," replied Gerald, loftily.

"And isn't poor Uncle Jack a Hartley, also, Gerald?" asked Maude, mischievously.

"Only in name," retorted Gerald.

"Ah! I suppose you mean he's like a worn sovereign. You call it a sovereign, although it has lost all trace of the Queen's head, or of St. George and the dragon. Poor, poor, degenerate Uncle Jack! How he is to be pitied! But, mark my words, I shall try to bring him to a sense of his real position. Come along, Gracie, let's go and dream that we are trying to reform our poor uncle."

It was abundantly evident that whether Uncle Jack were satisfied with his reception by his relations or not, he did not spend the night in meditation upon their treatment of him, for the next morning he was up with the lark and on his way to their dwelling by seven o'clock.

Arrived there, his soul was vexed within him. The house was quite covered with ivy and other creeping plants, but a recent gale of wind had loosened a huge branch of ivy, and it hung trailing down to the ground in helpless, piteous confusion. Gerald had seen its distress; nay, more, had been implored by Maude to nail it up. But he objected to spoil, or indeed soil, his delicate fingers with such plebeian work. Perhaps the truth was he knew he would be seen while doing it by people passing along the road. Uncle Jack's spirit was up in arms. He was a most tidy, orderly man, and, above all, one who delighted in using his hands.

Prowling round the garden, he espied a ladder; then, entering the house, where only the faithful Jane was up, he asked her for a hammer and some nails, which she

quickly found for him. With these in his hands he sallied forth triumphant.

In another moment the ladder was placed against the wall, the trailing branch slowly hauled up to the spot left so long to deplore its absence, and the hammer busy among the nails. The natural result was a noise. It awoke Gerald and Maude. The former, in a rage, darted out of bed and opened the window, with the hope that he might discover and put to an end the cause of such an unwonted din.

Horror of horrors! Uncle Jack, in his shirt-sleeves, fully exposed to the gaze of every passer-by, busily engaged in wrestling with the ivy! In a rage, Gerald banged the window to, and returned to bed to brood over the disgrace which his uncle's arrival would inevitably bring upon them.

Maude, more leisurely, made her appearance at her window.

"Uncle Jack, what are you doing?" she cried, in amazement. "Have you been sleeping in the summer-house? Why, it's hardly morning yet!"

"My dear, excuse me; it's past seven. I slept in the inn; most comfortably, too. And I am earning my breakfast. There, all your questions are answered."

"Well, it is good of you. That ivy has been quite an eye-sore to me; and I'm sure Grace was vexed about it, too. Jack hasn't had time to see to it, and Gerald—oh, well, Gerald came and *looked* at it. Perhaps he thought it was an improvement, a kind of 'weeping ivy,' you know, so he let it alone."

"Humph!" said Uncle Jack, and went on hammering noisily.

"How sweet the flowers smell, Uncle Jack!" cried the

girl, when he paused to search for a nail that had slipped out of his fingers—for the gentle breeze wafted the odors from the little garden into her room. “I really think I will get up and come and join you. I shall get an appetite for breakfast, at least, even if I don’t earn it, like you.”

“I’m afraid you don’t often get an appetite by early rising,” said her uncle, shaking his head in mock seriousness.

“No, I don’t now ; but I used to do so, I assure you. I had to give up being a busy bee, for I used to feel so awfully good at the thought that I was up while others were still sleeping that I got quite conceited, and that is very bad for one, isn’t it? So I gradually fell back into the ways of the sluggard. But you will see me down in a very few minutes.”

It may be thought that Maude’s treatment of her uncle, so different from her coldness of the evening before, was the sign of a capricious, not to say unstable, mind. The truth is, Maude was *naturally* amiable, warm-hearted and cheerful, and inclined to look at the bright side of things. But her loyalty to Gerald, who until lately had always been her hero, often warped her judgment and tended to keep the better side of her character in the background. To agree with him and support his opinions meant doing injustice to herself. Away from him, her natural temperament had fuller scope in which to display itself, and she could give it full play without the risk of going contrary to his views or hurting his feelings. And the fact that he had faults—serious ones, which none saw plainer than herself—often made her, in her vexation, utter hasty, angry words, which, later on, she deeply regretted. That morning she was herself, and at her best.

Uncle Jack, wanderer, ex-cowboy, miner, stage-driver, presumably poor, perhaps a ne'er-do-well, one certainly who was lacking in dignity and respect for the family name, was still her dead father's brother. As such her heart warmed toward him.

Meantime the knocking continued. Gerald found it impossible to compose himself to sleep. Once more he jumped out of bed and rushed to Jack's room. Jack, by-the-by, slept with his window open.

"Jack," cried Gerald, "do you hear that confounded row?"

"Yes, and jolly glad to hear it, too. It woke me up, and I had overslept myself."

"And do you know what it is?" asked Gerald, in angry tones.

"No, can't say I do exactly. Perhaps Jane is chopping sticks for yesterday's fire; she generally is a day late. I've had no breakfast here for several mornings. Or perhaps the swallows are knocking their nests together, poor beggars. Or perhaps it's the postman, who can't make Jane hear. Or perhaps—"

"Can't you be serious for a moment, Jack?" cried Gerald; "and listen to me. Round the corner there is our precious uncle, in his shirt-sleeves, too! perched on a ladder and fastening up the ivy. That's pretty cool, I think; it seems he has quite taken possession of us."

"In his shirt-sleeves, eh?" returned Jack, coolly. "Well, so long as they are clean I don't suppose it matters much."

For a moment Gerald was speechless with rage. Finally he was able to gasp out: "No wonder that you take to your low-lived backwoods relation, for your tastes and ideas seem as low as his. But let me tell you this, I won't

have you encouraging him to make this house the place for showing off his disreputable practices!"

"My dear Gerald," replied his brother, "you seem to forget the 'mater' has some voice in the matter. It strikes me she has something to do with the house and its arrangements." Since he had been earning his own living and mixing with men older than himself Jack had perhaps unconsciously acquired a much more manly tone. He never had been backward, however, in maintaining his own opinions, as Gerald knew very well.

"You seem to forget," sneered Gerald, "that as the head of the house I, too, have something to say in the matter."

"If you are the head of the house, I think you might find something to do to keep it going," retorted Jack, significantly, stung beyond endurance at his brother's manner.

Gerald flung himself out of the room. The shaft had found its mark.

A letter he received, just then, from a tobacconist at Rushton, demanding payment of an overdue account, did not tend to increase his cheerfulness, and he went down to breakfast in a villainous temper, which he was not too careful to conceal.

But Uncle Jack was irrepressible. He had heard the conversation between the brothers, for, just as Gerald entered Jack's room, he was placing his ladder underneath that window, in order to fix some trailing ivy on that side of the house. But his smile was as placid and his manner just as unruffled as if he had been listening to the highest eulogiums on himself and his doings. There was not the faintest tinge of resentment in the tone in which he spoke to Gerald. If one of the arts of civiliza-

tion be that of concealing one's feelings and controlling one's temper, it was plain the "poor" uncle had found some refining influences even in the wilds of the far West.

CHAPTER VIII.

A TALK ABOUT EUSTACE INGHAM.

"Work? Am I not at work from morn till night?

.
 . . Do I not twirl from left to right

For conscience sake? Is that no work?"

—J. R. LOWELL. *An Oriental Apologue.*

A FORTNIGHT had passed, and Uncle Jack was still at Marburn. Although the Ingham Arms was his headquarters, inasmuch that he always slept and had a good many of his meals there, yet he managed to spend a fair amount of his time, off and on, at Ivy Cottage, much to Gerald's disgust.

"I wonder how much longer this is to go on?" he grumbled, at times, when his uncle had paid them a longer visit than usual. "It's a blessing we have not got any more poor relations knocking about the world. In that case it would be better to take an inn right out. The prospect of a weekly bill might frighten them away after a short visit—an extremely short visit. As it is we get the worry of entertaining people without even the inn-keeper's profits."

"My dear Gerald, how can you talk so?" expostulated his mother, plaintively. "I am sure your poor uncle is welcome to what little we can offer him."

"That's just what *he* thinks," remarked Maude, slyly. "Isn't that what you mean, Gerald?"

"I don't imagine he thinks *my* welcome is a very hearty one," replied Gerald, grimly. "But some people never will take a hint."

"That may depend upon the person who gives it," retorted Maude. "No doubt Uncle Jack thinks your hints may very safely and properly be ignored."

"I did not think you would take his part," said Gerald, in injured tones, looking angrily at his sister.

"One should always take the part of the weak," replied she, sententiously. "Uncle Jack is getting old, a stranger in England, friendless, almost homeless, and poor—presumably so, that is; I judge by his appearance and—and my knowledge of human nature."

"Your knowledge of human nature! Oh, Maude, you at twenty talking so!" cried Grace, merrily.

"Yes, *moi qui vous parle*, twenty, untraveled, unlearned, un-everything you like; I grant all that. But mark this, I have acquired a habit of observation, and you shall have one proof of it. I have noticed that when a man has risen from poverty to the greatness of a substantial income he takes particular care to draw your attention to that—that, well, solid fact. Do you, for instance, Gerald, complain of your want of a good opening, your lack of a chance for getting on, then listen to him: 'You complain of having no opportunities? Let me tell you, young sir, a strong man makes them! Look at me; I began life without two sixpences to rub together, without friends, with little education'— By-the-by, however, I may state that this last is quite an unnecessary piece of information."

"Make him say, 'without manners,' too," suggested Gerald.

"Don't interrupt; let me finish, good folks. 'And now look at me, young man. Without boasting I may say that the Rothschilds would give me unlimited credit, unlimited credit. And I am proud, sir, of being the architect of my own fortunes.' "

"But I don't think your Uncle Jack ever hinted that he had been an architect," said Mrs. Hartley, simply. She had, as was often the case, failed to catch the meaning of Maude's words. Indeed, she was a most matter-of-fact person.

"No, mother, that's the worst of it; that's exactly what I've been endeavoring to make clear. It is poor Uncle Jack's misfortune that by ill luck he has never risen to that height."

"Well, there is, after all, some consolation for me, then, in his being poor. I get plenty of good advice as it is. But uncle on the top of the ladder, raised by his own exertions, too, would be absolutely insupportable," cried Gerald, as he left the room.

Not many days after that conversation Uncle Jack gave his relations at Ivy Cottage a little definite information as to his plans for the immediate future.

As it happened all were present when the communication was made. The elder Hartley had invited himself to supper.

"Do you know, Maria," he remarked, "I've grown fond of this neighborhood, and I really think I should like to settle down here, for a time at least. And then, of course, I should be near you."

Gerald looked as if he thought their uncle's proximity

to Ivy Cottage would be anything but an unmixed blessing.

"If you don't intend to build," he said, "I'm afraid you will have to settle a little further off. There isn't a decent house to let in the place."

"Excuse me, Gerald. The very house I should like will be vacant shortly—Mrs. Jones's cottage."

"Oh! is she going? Well, I don't call that much of a place," replied Gerald, contemptuously.

"Don't you, Gerald?" said his uncle, in unruffled tones. "Well, I must admit it isn't exactly a palace. But if it suits me, and my means—"

"Take it by all means," cried Jack, heartily. "And I'm very glad you are going to live near us," he added, quite disregarding the furious look Gerald cast at him.

"I suppose I shall have to write to Eustace Ingham," continued his uncle; "it seems he acts as his father's agent. So old Sawkins informed me, and he seems to be well versed in the details of Marburn life."

"I think you are pretty well up in all that goes on here," said Jack. "You seem to know everybody already."

"Yes, indeed. You are quite an American," said Maude, with a smile. "Some travelers say our cousins are very inquisitive."

"My dear," answered Uncle Jack, gravely, "you know what Pope says—

"The proper study of mankind is man."

and, to go a little further back, a great Latin poet proudly boasted that he took an interest in everything that concerned his fellow-creatures. At present the fel-

low-creatures nearest to me are the inhabitants of Marburn; naturally, therefore, for the present, I take the greatest interest in them."

"And that's considerably more than the squire does," observed Maude, dryly. "In his eyes the tenants are merely so many machines for grinding out rent every half-year."

"And yet he does not seem much the richer, in spite of all the grinding, according to Mrs. Bent."

"Ah! she ought to know," said Mrs. Hartley, "for she told me she had lived at the Hall for twenty years. But what cause did she give for the poor squire's lack of means?"

"Oh, many—race-horses, principally. What a fool he must be not to give them up!"

"My dear uncle," said Maude, gravely, "it is plain you are quite a stranger to English ideas, and the power of sentiment and tradition. Squire Ingham is eminently conservative, even in his failings. For generations the Inghams have bred, kept and run race-horses; in fact, done everything with them but make money. Squire Ingham keeps up the traditions of the house. Long ago the Inghams began to ruin themselves by thus supporting the family dignity. Year by year the mortgages have been growing heavier; and now I don't suppose that the squire really owns an acre of the old property. Fortunately, Mrs. Ingham's land was settled on herself and heirs. Luckily, he can't touch that."

"I must say, Maude," interposed her uncle, "you have a very pretty talent for discussing the failings of your friends."

"Friends, uncle? Squire Ingham is no friend of mine, for at times he is barely civil to me," and the girl's lip

quivered. But, quickly recovering herself, she went on: "And if he were a friend that were all the more reason why I should discuss his failings, because it seems to me that the failings of our friends are just those left open to honest discussion. To criticise harshly the faults of your enemies might seem uncharitable. And some people might put it down to 'envy, hatred and malice.' No, no, leave me at least my friends."

"And what of your relations?" said Uncle Jack, looking at her with an amused air.

"Relations?" returned she, with a smile; "well, in their case you have a further privilege. You may discuss their failings before their very face—unless, of course, they are extremely rich and influential."

"Then I may consider myself quite protected from your attacks?" said he, looking keenly at her.

"Oh, at present, in your case, uncle, a little discretion might not be out of place," she retorted, with a playful bow.

"Maude, my love, you shouldn't be so plain-spoken," murmured Mrs. Hartley. "Your uncle will be hurt."

"Oh, not at all, Maria!" replied Uncle Jack, heartily. "I can stand a little joke, even against myself." He had found out by this time that his sister-in-law often did not understand jesting. "Now, will some one tell me what I am to do about this cottage," he went on, abruptly changing the subject.

"I think you should write to young Mr. Ingham, or call upon him," answered Grace, thinking he looked at her.

"Oh! Eustace Ingham," said he, "there's another idle loafer for you!" and he shook his head and cast a curious glance at Maude.

The girl colored slightly as she caught his look. Her first impulse was to burst out into an enthusiastic defense of the young man, but fear of betraying too much warmth prudently restrained her, so she contented herself with saying: "Indeed, uncle, you don't know all the inner life of Marburn yet, or you would not style young Mr. Ingham an idle loafer."

"Of course, my dear, I should be sorry to do any one an injustice," Uncle Jack hastened to reply, not being unobservant of her tell-tale blush.

Grace took up the cudgels stoutly in defense of Ingham.

"Eustace Ingham is a brave, unselfish man," she said, decisively. "For the sake of others he has thrown away most excellent prospects. He was a barrister, just beginning to make his way, when old Mr. Brown, the agent of the property, died. The squire said he wouldn't appoint another, as he couldn't afford it, and so took the whole management of the property into his own hands. He hates business matters, and, in fact, trouble of any kind, except in the way of sport, so the result was a most dreadful muddle. The tenants could not get anything done properly, and the sub-agent, who received the rents, would listen to no complaints. More than that, the money that should have been spent in paying the interest on the mortgages was squandered elsewhere. Then, at his mother's entreaties, Eustace stepped forward, gave up his profession, and came home and settled down as his father's agent."

"Yes, and a jolly, thankless task it is," cried Jack, "to stand between the squire and his tenants! When the interest on the mortgages has been paid there isn't much left for spending on the property in the way of improve-

ments. I bet Eustace has spent nearly all his savings in trying to patch up things."

"Is that so?" asked Uncle Jack, in a tone of great interest. "Then I'm sorry I did the young man an injustice. But how do they manage to live, then? Practically, they seem to get nothing from the property."

"Well, I suppose they live on Mrs. Ingham's money," replied Grace; "in fact, there is nothing else for them."

"Well, I'm glad I've heard the truth about the young man," and once more he looked at Maude. "I like a man who isn't afraid to face difficulties boldly, especially when he does so for the sake of others," and then he looked across at Gerald, who colored a little at this mark of attention.

He had one sign of grace left, he could still blush.

The next day the elder Hartley called upon Eustace Ingham, and was not at all disappointed with him.

CHAPTER IX.

UNCLE JACK'S COTTAGE.

"For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich;
And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,
So honor peereth in the meanest habit.

.
. . . Neither art thou the worse
For this poor furniture and mean array."

—SHAKESPEARE.

UNCLE JACK had no difficulty in securing the cottage lately occupied by Mrs. Jones. In fact, Eustace Ingham

was only too glad to be able to procure a presumably solvent tenant. The late occupant of the cottage hardly came under that category. And doubtless the young man had an additional satisfaction in being able to oblige a relation of Maude's.

Eustace had admired Maude from the very first moment of their mutual acquaintance. As we have seen, she was a very pretty girl, and beauty in woman always has attractions for a healthy, well-regulated masculine mind. She was sprightly in humor, too, and gentle in disposition, with strongly developed powers of loving, and, also, generous and unselfish. All this he had discovered as time went on, and it was no wonder that his admiration grew stronger and eventually trespassed into the domain of liking. Admiration and liking are first cousins to love—that soon followed in the warm, manly heart of Eustace Ingham.

So Uncle Jack obtained the promise of Willow Cottage. It was well for old Betty Jones's moral well-being that she had removed far away from Marburn. Otherwise, on seeing how the incoming tenant was treated, she would have felt tempted to indulge in envy and uncharitableness.

"New paper!" she would have cried; "fresh paint, gravel on the gardening-walk, a new 'andle to the pump, bells! And, actilly, a few lovely shrubs from the 'All! Well, I declare! and all for a grubby old bachelor!"

No, Betty, not exactly; not quite for his sake. You forget the lovely young niece in the background. Perhaps in the days gone by, long before the wrinkles gathered on your snowy brow, or the roses had faded from your cheeks, while your eyes put the diamonds to shame with their sparkle, when your waist was slender and in-

viting, your step light and springy—perhaps for your sake some hard-hearted landlord may have shown unusual kindness, even to a grubby old bachelor uncle. But you have had your day; be thankful; treasure up the memories of the past and give way to the young. Besides, Betty, you were always readier with your complaints than your rent; don't forget that.

Yes, Eustace thoroughly “did up,” as the expression is, Willow Cottage for his new tenant. It was not a particularly picturesque little house, and the willows had long since disappeared from the front of it—perhaps Betty had found fuel scarce, at times. But certainly one charm it still possessed, in a most lovely old-fashioned back garden, most comfortably shut in from rough winds and prying eyes—just the place for lovers to wander in, hand in hand, exchanging mutual vows of love and trust, or whispering sweet confidences of early sweethearting days.

It may have been that when Eustace entered this garden, in the early days of Uncle Jack's tenancy, he pictured himself and Maude treading together its tender green sward, or sitting side by side on the old rustic seat, just within the shadow of the wide-spreading beech tree, the sole survivor in that neighborhood of its race. But then, young men will indulge in day-dreams when fair maidens occupy their thoughts.

Uncle Jack furnished his house very plainly indeed—Gerald said, “in the most beggarly fashion.” That may, however, have been from sheer prejudice against his uncle. Had he lavished much money on his furniture—supposing, indeed, he had the means—doubtless Gerald would have considered this a most selfish proceeding on his uncle's part, considering the scarcity of money at

Ivy Cottage. Some people never will be pleased. He was, moreover, excessively disgusted at his uncle's settling down so near to them. His presence seemed an ever-present blot on the dignity of the family escutcheon. And, then, his past life! And his habit of talking of it, for he rather gloried in all his experiences,, which he was fond of detailing to any willing listener. Besides, Gerald disliked him for the same reason that Ahab disliked the prophet Micaiah—"He doth prophesy evil concerning me, and not good." Uncle Jack seemed to Gerald too much like an incarnate conscience, ever pointing out to him the path of duty.

"Why do you encourage him to live here?" he asked Maude, one day, as she was setting off to superintend some of the arrangements at Willow Cottage. Why should you take the trouble to engage a servant for him? Perhaps you may be held responsible for her wages."

"My dear Gerald, don't talk nonsense!" replied Maude. "Encourage him to stay, indeed! Haven't you found out yet how obstinate he is when once his mind is made up to do a thing? It seems to me that nothing will move him then. Besides, you must remember he is a Hartley, after all, and I am not going to appear as if I were ashamed of him. If we keep aloof people will naturally imagine we are, and for some good reason, too. And, besides," she went on, in her usually inconsistent and illogical but winning manner, "I am too proud to be always asking myself what other people think or say about what I am doing. That's the height of snobbishness, I think. If you think a thing's right, do it, and never mind what people say. That's my motto—there!"

"Why, you are as bad as uncle," grumbled Gerald, stung by his sister's remarks.

"Am I, Gerald? Well, forgive me if I am a bit cross this morning. I know my tongue is an unruly member, sometimes."

"Yes, that's true," said Gerald, ungraciously, "but you are so inconsistent, Maude. You were awfully annoyed at first when the old chap came."

"Well, perhaps I was," replied Maude, "and I admit that I rather felt annoyed at his staying, if the confession of that will do you any good. But when you can't alter things the next best course is to endure them with the best possible grace."

CHAPTER X.

CROSSLAND MAKES A DISCOVERY.

"This weak impress of love is as a figure
Trenched in ice; which with an hour's heat
Dissolves to water, and doth lose his form."

—SHAKESPEARE.

WILLIAM HOLMES, one of Crossland's cousins, occupied the position of cashier in Glennie's Bank, Lombard Street, London. At very rare intervals he came down to Marburn to spend a day or two with Frank Crossland. One of these rare and flying visits took place some few months after the elder Hartley had taken possession of Willow Cottage.

On the first evening after his arrival he went with Frank for a stroll round his estate. On their way home they met Maude Hartley, who was taking a short cut across the fields to the vicarage.

“What a lovely girl!” cried Holmes, rapturously, when she had passed on out of hearing. “You know her, too, I see.”

“Yes, I know her very well,” answered Crossland, with the faintest blush on his cheeks, which by no means escaped the observant eye of his cousin.

“Ah! a blush, I see. Well, it is not only becoming to your face, old man, but creditable to your feelings; for I was thinking you must have a heart of stone to know the young lady and not fall in love with her. One can see she is a lady.”

“Oh, she is that, most decidedly; related to Lord Granton, you know. His family name is Hartley. She is a Miss Hartley.”

“Ah, ah! birth and beauty combined, I see. An additional reason for the blush.”

“My dear Willy, don’t talk nonsense! Birth and beauty are all very well, but you know they are rather unsubstantial things to marry on, and it has been a heavy drain on the old place paying my father’s debts. I must look out for somebody with a decent dowry, as a natural consequence.”

“I may conclude, then, that this young lady has not been dowered with everything by Fortune?”

“No, indeed; so far as I am concerned, the most necessary gift is wanting. Miss Hartley is as poor as the proverbial church mouse.”

“Sorry for her, and for you. Has she relations here?”

“Yes, she is living with her mother, and, besides her, there are two brothers and a sister. The elder brother, by the way, is a great lazy lout, who won’t work, but isn’t ashamed to beg, sponges on his mother, too, who has a very slender income, and borrows of his friends.”

"You among the number, I suppose?"

"Well, just as far as I would let him go. But I had to tell him straight out I was practically a poor man myself."

"You gave him quite a 'straight tip,' then. And has he settled down to the enjoyment of life as a confirmed loafer?"

"No, not at all. Like Mr. Micawber, he's waiting for something to turn up—in all probability from his noble cousin, Lord Granton. But this something is long on the way."

"I see; that hardly improves the young lady's prospects. One would rather shrink from having to say: 'I take thee and thy brother as well.'"

"Yes, rather. But, mind you, the girls and the younger brother are made of quite different stuff. All the false pride and idleness of the family is concentrated in Gerald."

"Like your river Lent. Not much extent of surface but deep."

"Oh, deep enough. But now I think we may let Mr. Gerald Hartley drop. As a subject for a lengthened discourse, except to 'point a moral,' I don't find him particularly fascinating."

Not even to his cousin would Crossland admit how deeply he had fallen in love with Maude Hartley; that he was, as he expressed it, 'hard hit,' and yet that he was obliged to stand by and allow another to woo her without let or hindrance from himself. That was indeed gall and wormwood to the young man. To have a rival, and yet be obliged to keep in the background! He had quite sufficient self-esteem to believe that, had it been otherwise, his wooing would not have been in vain. And

to be under thirty, handsome, sound in mind and limb, well educated, of good birth—surely these are no bad credentials wherewith to go a-wooing with a fair chance of success! Such, at least, was Crossland's opinion. But, oh, the pity of it! To have to allow such advantages to remain idle, unprofited by and useless!

But suddenly the future grew brighter. The obstacles in Crossland's path were gone, vanished; nay, had he but known it, they had never existed except in his own imagination.

It was his cousin, Holmes, who opened his eyes to the truth. And the very day, too, after their meeting with Maude. Holmes had been for a constitutional.

"I didn't know you had one of my customers, or clients, or patrons rusticating in Marburn," he remarked, on his return.

"Nor did I," replied Crossland; "not a very profitable one, I should fancy, unless it be one of the big tenant-farmers," he added, dryly. "I suppose they manage to save money, in spite of their dreadful complaints of hard times. The landowners in the neighborhood won't give you much trouble with their accounts. You don't mean Squire Ingham?"

"No, I mean a man that lives at Willow Cottage, where old Betty Jones used to live. Hartley his name is."

"Hartley!" echoed Crossland. "Uncle Jack, the Anglo-American? I didn't know your people had taken to money-lending pure and simple—strictly private and confidential, don't you know; no connection with so-called banks, etc.; you know the style of advertisement."

"My dear Frank, what are you talking about? I say this Hartley is one of our customers. Keeps an account, draws *his* money out, not *ours*. Do you twig now?"

"Does he?" replied Crossland, listlessly, not feeling interested in the subject. "I suppose he has saved a few hundreds out in America."

"A few hundreds?" cried Holmes, contemptuously. "Why, man, do you know what the first drafts he paid in came to?"

"Never was good at riddles. Give it up," drawled Crossland.

"Well, let me tell you, Mr. Frank," cried Holmes, piqued at his cousin's real or pretended indifference, "let me tell you this, they came to eighty thousand pounds!"

"What!" almost screamed Crossland, springing up from his chair in excitement, "eighty thousand pounds!"

"Yes, sir, eighty thousand pounds; only I hardly see, at present, why you should so suddenly grow excited at the mention of the sum. You don't happen to be a relation of his."

"No, but shall I tell you who is?"

"All right; fire away," said Holmes.

"Well, then, the very girl we met yesterday, Maude Hartley; she's one of his nieces."

"Oh, *thrice* adorable Maude! Oh, enviable niece!" softly murmured Holmes. "Presuming," he added, "that the man is a bachelor."

"So he has given us all to suppose, and I have no reason to doubt his word. But I wonder what reason he has for posing as 'the poor relation'?"

"My dear Frank, the reason is plain enough. In fact, you've heard it scores of times in the old childish days. I did, at any rate. 'By the life of Pharaoh, surely ye are spies.' 'To see the nakedness of the land are ye come.'"

"Well, that's very likely," answered Crossland, after a moment's reflection. "So much the worse, I should

say, for Master Gerald; as a prospective heir he doesn't seem to be in it. I wouldn't give twopence for his chance of benefiting by the old man's will. There's some sense, after all, in finding out privately the real character of your relations, when you've got anything to leave them."

"Quite so," replied Holmes, sententiously, "and in this case we can only say, so much the better for the others. Go in and win the fair Maude, my boy. Surely she must have crept into the heart of the rich old uncle. Go in and win her, my boy," he repeated, slapping his cousin on the shoulder.

"Yes, I mean to try now," said Crossland, "duty and inclination will go hand in hand. And your coming down here now, old chap, has turned out trumps and no mistake. All the same, don't get into a wax when I say I'm jolly glad you're going early to-morrow morning."

"What an ungrateful beggar you are! This is a splendid return for the wrinkle I've given you!"

"Wrinkle! Ah! that's just the point. If the uncle sees you he may imagine, when I come forward, that you have not been quite so reticent about banking matters as you ought to have been. And, in his eyes, I should at once lose my character as a perfectly disinterested wooer. No, no, Willy, we must not let him see you."

"That's your game, is it, Frank? Oh, then I'll forgive your apparent want of gratitude and hospitality. But I must say you are rather a cool hand, not bad at calculation when number one is concerned."

"Thanks, old man, that's a very pretty compliment. In other words, you mean I'm not quite a fool. No, I hope not where my interests are concerned. But then

why should I be ashamed of confessing that I am going to make use of your information? We *must* show a little worldly wisdom even in our love-making. However much I might love Maude Hartley, I couldn't afford to marry her as a penniless girl. I suddenly discover, however, that she has most excellent prospects. Very well, now I am free to give my feelings fair play. Any great sin in that?"

"Not the slightest," said his cousin, with a smile. "Go in and win, I repeat, and may I be best man at the wedding."

Crossland began his wooing of Maude Hartley under what may be considered favorable auspices. He had been on friendly terms with all her family ever since their first arrival, and, if not a frequent, had at least been a regular, visitor at Ivy Cottage. He had, moreover, nothing to repent of in his past treatment of Uncle Jack. Decided failure as he was supposed to be, Crossland had always shown himself inclined to be friendly to him, and that not merely out of consideration for the family. His reasons for thus acting had not been destitute of self-interest. It was, in fact, one of his rules of life, only broken in the case of Job Turner, whom he disliked, that it might often prove worth while to go out of his way to show a little kindness to people who might seem the least able to return it. On the other hand, it might prove dangerous to make an enemy of any man.

Civility cost nothing, and frequently might prove a good investment.

CHAPTER XI.

RESCUED FROM DROWNING.

“His life was gentle; and the elements
So mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up,
And say to all the world, ‘This was a man!’ ”

—SHAKESPEARE.

IN the beginning of the following month a terrific and most destructive gale swept across the whole countryside in the neighborhood of Rushton, and, day after day, high winds wrought havoc in every direction. Near the town, and in the village of Marburn, the roads and footways were strewn with pieces of chimney-pots, bricks, tiles and other débris, while, here and there, a stack of chimneys had fallen, causing considerable damage to the roof below. Trees were blown down in all directions, and an old-fashioned, half-ruined house on the outskirts of the village was literally overthrown. Also, to the great grief of the vicar, one of the turrets of the ancient church-tower was blown off altogether.

Among its other natural attractions, the neighborhood of Rushton could boast of a river, called the Lent. As the country all about was remarkably flat, this river was somewhat sluggish in its movements, and, except in winter, when its current was rather swollen, the patient barge-horses found but little assistance from it in their toils, even when pulling with the stream. But the storm had quite altered its character. The numerous tributary streams and brooks which usually, with placid, quiet, meandering ways, flowed into it, had become full to overflowing with the recent heavy downfall, and

poured with swifter current their augmented contributions into the bosom of the mother stream. Far and wide the Lent overflowed its banks, spreading its wild destruction over the low-lying fields on each side of it and sweeping along in its impetuous current everything portable in its headlong course to the sea. Thus wind and water combined in the work of devastation.

Squire Ingham groaned over the work of the many repairs which he foresaw would be required, and was so bad-tempered that inside the Hall, as well as outside, the east wind might be said to prevail most unpleasantly.

It seemed to him, as he sat in his study thinking of his empty coffers and the numerous demands that would be made upon his slender resources by an exacting tenantry, that it was a bitter irony of fate which caused some of the Radicals of Rushton, at that identical time, to be holding him up by name, with others of the neighboring gentry, as one whose eyes "swelled out with fatness," a "bloated aristocrat," who preyed upon the poor and grew rich upon their leanness, a capitalist, who sweated all whom he employed, etc. It may be remarked that the Radical vocabulary was singularly rich in opprobrious epithets, even if they were not always justly applied.

"Here's one of my own tenants, too, been holding forth to them," he cried out, in a rage, throwing down the *Rushton Advertiser* in disgust and looking across to Eustace, who was reading the *Times*. "We are not half careful enough in finding out a man's political opinions before we take him on as a tenant. My father wouldn't have had a Radical dog bark on the estate."

"Ah! that may be, but you must remember the world has moved on a bit since then. Public opinion wouldn't

stand such doings nowadays. Besides, in these times it's hard enough to get good tenants at all, whatever their opinions may be."

"Well, I didn't encourage Radicals on the place when I was looking after the property," grunted the squire, casting an angry look at his son. "But I don't suppose you are at all careful in the matter."

"I don't think I am," replied Eustace, calmly, "although I do think I should draw the line at a professional agitator."

"Sometimes the amateurs are the worst."

Instead of replying, Eustace began to wonder what his father's feelings would be should his latest tenant at Willow Cottage take to airing his opinions on a public platform.

"Well, I suppose you will have to go and see what damage has been done," groaned his father; "we shall have all sorts of complaints."

The squire was in pressing need of money, just then, with which to pay off one of his private debts, but he felt this was a most unpropitious time to ask his son to supply his demands, for Eustace would insist upon first making the repairs rendered necessary by the late storm. It was only on the condition that he should have quite a free hand that he had undertaken the management of the property.

"Yes, and well-founded complaints, too," answered the young man, throwing down his paper. "I must be off to see with my own eyes what wants doing." Then, ringing the bell, he ordered his horse to be saddled.

A little later, when he was riding past Willow Cottage, he saw Mr. Hartley mournfully contemplating the dam-

age done to his little front garden, which was strewn with fragments of tiles and bricks. Half of a chimney had been blown down.

"Nice business, colonel, isn't it?" he remarked, as Eustace stopped to speak to him. Uncle Jack was fond of bestowing gratuitous titles. "But, mind you," he added, hastily, "I shan't ask you to put up that chimney. You've spent a lot over the old place lately; treated me handsome. And I won't forget it. This is my little job. 'Fair doings all round' is my motto."

"I wish all the tenants would act up to that," said Eustace, rather ruefully. "Some of them will let a place go to ruin before they will even put a nail in, or a handful of mortar, even when they live under a repairing lease. But, according to the *Rushton and Packlington Advertiser*, all the tenants are simply perfect in their little ways; it's only the landlords that can ever do wrong."

"I am afraid yours is rather a thankless task this morning," hazarded Uncle Jack.

"Yes, very much so. But then, you know," he added, sadly, but with no trace of bitterness in his tone, "if it were not for the thankless tasks we have life might be made a little too easy for us." Then, wishing his new tenant good-morning, Eustace rode off.

"Thankless tasks!" murmured Uncle Jack to himself, "well, I guess that young man has his share. 'Pears to me his whole life, at present, is a thankless task, managing and patching up a property merely for the sake of the creditors. Nice sort of man the old squire must be! I'd like to give him a bit of my mind. Keeping race-horses and gambling, indeed! I'd gamble him, an old selfish reprobate! When a man begins to play the fool with the old family property his friends ought to have the

power of locking him up. That's my opinion. But now I must be off, and get this blessed old chimney fixed up again. So now for Jim Bowers, the bricklayer."

The said Jim Bowers lived in a cottage facing the road which led to Rushton, just half-way between that town and Marburn. There was also a short cut to his house leading through the fields. This was the way Uncle Jack chose. Time was money; moreover, a walk through the fields was pleasanter both to the feet and eyes. About half a mile from the village this path crossed a little tributary of the Lent by means of a wooden foot-bridge.

Before reaching this bridge—in fact, while still three hundred yards from it—the old gentleman met his nephew, Gerald, evidently on his way to Marburn, and, presumably, Ivy Cottage. The young man was in an evil temper that morning. Lord Granton had written, at last, in answer to his second appeal to him, bidding him have patience, and saying that sooner or later he hoped to be able to do something for him, but just then there seemed to be no vacancy that he could command. As it was not the first time his noble relative had inculcated the virtue of patience, Gerald's impatience that morning had not been unreasonably aroused. And then he had received by the same post a dunning letter from a tradesman at Rushton respecting a bill which he was unable to pay. Some remnant of shame had prevented his troubling Mrs. Hartley again, and Grace and Maude had both declared that at present they could not help him. Jack had flatly refused to listen to his request for a loan, saying among other things, eminently truthful but scarcely pleasant hearing, that Gerald was already considerably in his debt. And he added, too, that he himself had a bill to pay that week. Above all, Uncle

Jack had given him a gentle remonstrance that morning, after hearing of the tenor of Lord Granton's letter, and had spoken of the folly of building any hopes on the promises of others, however well-intentioned they might be. As usual, Gerald had bitterly resented his uncle's interference. And now, on his way to his friend Crossland's, he found further cause for ill humor. On arriving at the little bridge, physically brave as he was, he did not dare trust himself to it. It was a very narrow wooden bridge with a hand-rail on either side of it, and it was built on wooden beams, or trestles. One of these supports—the one built just in the middle of the stream—had been swept away by the swollen waters, now rushing along with unwonted violence and speed. The storm had left its mark on the old bridge which had been for a long time gradually rotting away under the influence of wind and wave. Just in the center of the bridge there was now, therefore, a long space to which Gerald would not venture to trust even his slender weight, especially as he was fearful lest the remaining supports had been undermined and weakened during the late storm.

"Hang it all! what a bore," he muttered to himself, surveying the bridge, which trembled from one end to the other with every gust of wind which blew. "I'm not going to trust myself to that rickety old thing now. My only wonder is that every blessed beam hasn't been washed away. I wouldn't mind a wetting, but tumbling into that current would be above a joke; you'd be swept into the Lent before you could swim a stroke."

And he turned back in disgust.

"I suppose this is the way to Jim Bowers, the brick-layer's, Gerald?" asked his uncle, as the young man came up to him.

"Yes; you can't miss it," replied Gerald, gruffly, without stopping.

Uncle Jack appeared to take no notice of his short reply. "Hasn't forgiven my speaking to him this morning," said he to himself. "Poor Gerald! how different from his father. *He* wouldn't sulk for a moment."

In the meantime Gerald quickened his pace. He felt ill at ease. Conscience was urging him on to hurry back and warn his uncle that the bridge was unsafe. Once he stopped, half resolved to obey the still small voice. Another moment he hesitated; his half-formed resolution came to naught.

"No," he muttered, doggedly, to himself, "if he can't mind his own business I can mind mine, at any rate. People must look after themselves. He's old enough to do that. And, if he does get in, a ducking may do him good. And perhaps the old bridge may stand his weight, after all."

Thus stifling his better impulses with these plausible arguments, he hurried on. But almost involuntarily he put his hands over his ears. Was he afraid of suddenly hearing some cry for help?

Uncle Jack by no means liked the appearance of the bridge. "Tumbledown old concern," he murmured, "and not improved by this storm. And what a big space between the two landing-places! It never struck me before. I suppose the extra quantity of water made it look different. I don't like it, don't like it," and he shook his head solemnly. "I would not venture," he went on, to himself, "if I didn't know I was lighter than Gerald. It carried him all right, and so it will me. Here goes, at any rate." He reached the middle of the bridge in safety. Then there was a snap, and then a gradual sinking of the

frail planks. The next moment Uncle Jack was being hurried down toward the Lent by the impetuous waters of the swollen stream.

Vainly he tried to strike out for the land; in vain, too, he nervously clutched at the willows which overhung each bank; the stream seemed resistless in its might. Every attempt he made was ineffectual.

And now he is in the broader waters of the Lent itself. Once he sinks, still powerless to wrestle for life and safety. He rises to the surface; consciousness is fast leaving him. His strength is almost gone. One last prayer rises from his heart.

Suddenly he feels himself seized by a strong arm. A few yards more, and he is urged by the same strong arm toward the left bank. Another moment, and his feet touch the ground. "Hold up for a second," cries a friendly voice in his ear.

Struggling, floundering, and forced onward by that kindly arm, he gets on a few yards further. Another moment, and he and his preserver are lying exhausted on the sodden ground of a low-lying meadow which has only recently been deserted because of the overflowings of the Lent.

CHAPTER XII.

UNCLE JACK'S ILLNESS.

“The end crowns all;
And that old common arbitrator, Time,
Will one day end it.”

—SHAKESPEARE.

“THAT was a near shave! How am I to thank you?” asked Uncle Jack of his preserver, when he had somewhat recovered from the effects of his immersion.

George Turner—for he it was who had come up just in time to effect the rescue—smiled as he answered: “I can only say, as one always says under such circumstances, I don’t want any thanks; I only did—”

“Just what any one would have done, or tried to do. Exactly. Very commonplace on the part of both of us, isn’t it? But how differently two Frenchmen would have behaved! Why, we should have been in each other’s arms, and I should have looked a bigger fool than I do now, when I can’t stammer out a few words of gratitude. What cold-blooded, reserved people we English are at times!” added Hartley, with a rueful air. Then, as the memory of those dreadful moments through which he had just passed returned to his mind with full force, he heartily wrung the young man’s hand, crying earnestly: “But you must imagine all I would like to say.”

“Well, you see,” said George, deprecatingly, “after all, there wasn’t much danger for me. I knew exactly the channel of the river and when we should get out of

the strong current. But now," he went on, eager to change the subject, and perceiving that the elder man was shivering, "let us both go to my home and change our wet things. I daresay we can rig you out in something dry."

"Not a bad idea," replied Uncle Jack, gratefully. "Your house is nearer than mine, and we must not catch rheumatism. I must say I feel a bit queer."

They soon reached the Old Grange, and Hartley for the first time met Job Turner. It happened to be one of the old man's bad days. The east wind had increased his rheumatism, and with it the unamiability of his temper. As Ben the plowman expressed it, "T' owd master was regular on the grumble."

"What do you bring him here for, George?" he muttered, aside, in a tone which was meant to be low but was too shrill to be unheard. "I'm sure we're poor enough without havin' to entertain an idle ne'er-do-well like him." Job always felt a grudge, in those days, against men of no known occupation.

"He's been nearly drowned," said George, gently.

"Well, well, it's like enough. Doesn't t' old Book say they shall be clean swept away—them as is ungodly? Ask your mother if it isn't so."

There was no time to argue with the churlish old fellow. "We'll go to mother," said George, promptly; "that's a good idea, father. You've a kind heart, in spite of all your talk." And then he hurried Uncle Jack upstairs, where they met his mother, who was just coming down, in great concern at the news Molly had taken to her of their arrival and condition.

Uncle Jack was as pleased at her cordial reception as he had been repulsed by the old man's behavior. And

when she insisted that it was safer for him to go to bed, if only for a few hours, after the wetting he had had, and promised hot bottles and warm blankets to take away the horrible chill which he was still feeling, he gratefully accepted her offer. In a short time he was comfortably "fixed," as he called it, in George's bed, and the warm cordial, which Mrs. Turner brought him with her own hands, soon caused him to fall asleep.

It was late in the evening when he awoke to find George sitting reading by the fire, which had been lighted soon after his arrival. Something in the young man's wearied attitude and in the earnest face, which drooped a little over his book, roused Uncle Jack's deep interest. Life was not all too smooth for this gallant rescuer of his. How patient he had been with his cross old father! And, now he remembered, Jack the younger had spoken gratefully more than once of all his kindness to him. And, ah! what was he doing now?

With no suspicion that his patient was awake and watching him, George, feeling too tired to read, pushed his book away, and, taking a photograph from his pocket, gazed long and earnestly at it. Uncle Jack could see it was a girl's face at which he was looking, but was too far off to recognize the likeness. A deep sigh, as George replaced the photograph in its little case and slowly returned it to his pocket, still further enlisted the ex-American's sympathy.

"Turner," he said, "and was dismayed to find how feeble his voice had become, "Turner, help me up. It's getting late. I must go home."

"Nay, nay," said George, springing up and taking his hand kindly. "You must lie still. The doctor is coming to see you in the morning before you get up. He has

been once—mother sent for him—but you were asleep. You have been feverish and restless, moaning a good deal. And he said you had had a shock to your system. He left this for you to drink.” And George held a glass to his patient’s lips as tenderly as his mother might have done.

“But—but,” said Hartley, “I shall be such a trouble to you all. Your father—”

“Oh, he, too, says you must stay,” said George. “I have explained all about it to him. He was scarcely himself this morning. You know, he suffers so with the rheumatism. Yes, I’ve been on to Willow Cottage and have told your servant where you are, and that she is to take care of everything; and Gr—I mean your niece, Miss Hartley, will kindly look after her a little.”

“Have you been to Ivy Cottage, too?” asked Uncle Jack, not unobservant of the little slip George had made.

“Yes. Oh! no trouble; only a pleasure to drop in there and tell them all about it. Jack is at Rushton until very late this evening, or I’m sure he would have come to look after you, and Mrs. Hartley is not well enough. But Miss Hartley will be here first thing in the morning. She would have come to-night, but cannot leave her mother.”

“I thought I had another nephew,” said the invalid, faintly. It tired him to talk.

“Ah! you must not speak another word,” said George, not answering the reference to Gerald, whom he had heard flatly refuse to visit his uncle.

“I say, you must go to bed yourself,” said Uncle Jack. “I shall be right enough when I am left alone. I want to sleep; I’m strangely sleepy.”

“Good-night,” said George. “I’m only in the next

room, if you want anything. You must just knock at the wall, and I'll be with you in a moment."

He went out as he spoke. But more than once during the night that followed Uncle Jack awoke to find him in the room, either arranging the bedclothes, which he was constantly tossing about, or mending the fire, or lighting a fresh night-light.

The next morning the doctor came and ordered Uncle Jack to stay in bed for a week, at least, if he wanted to avoid a most severe attack of rheumatic fever. Later in the day Grace came and sat beside him for an hour or two with her needlework. Her uncle was very pleased at that attention on her part, and liked to watch the sweet face bent over the sewing and listen to the click, click of the busy needle.

"My dear," he said, once, "why do you work so hard?"

"Because I have so much sewing to do," she answered, brightly. Her business was prospering; she was becoming known as "a good hand" at it.

"Are you doing it for your mother?"

"No—yes—well, that is, indirectly," replied Grace, with some hesitancy.

The sick man watched her a long time without speaking. He had more than once heard members of the family appealing to her for money, and had concluded that she had a little income of her own. Was it possible that that little was earned by the labor of her hands? What a sweet, brave face she had! He found himself murmuring: "Strength and honor are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come."

"My dear," he said, feebly, "if ever you want money you must let me know. Will you?"

She gave a quick glance of surprised dismay. Had he discovered her secret? Did he think that, poor as he was, he would rather pinch a little himself than have her work too hard? She thought it was so, and was as grateful in her pretty, graceful way as if he had promised her a fortune.

"But now, uncle dear, you must not talk," she said, after she had thanked and kissed him. "You must drink this and go to sleep again," and she handed him his medicine with an imperious little air which made him obey her.

When he awoke again she had gone, but the roses left in a vase upon the table, and a strip of the pretty silk she had been sewing, which, having slipped down upon the floor by her chair, had escaped her observation, convinced him that he had not only dreamed she had been there.

A little later George came in the room, and thinking Uncle Jack was asleep, held the roses caressingly to his face, and even gathered up the strip of silk, and after toying with it in a tender, dreamy fashion, folded it carefully and placed it in his pocket. "I fancy I know what is going on," said the ex-American to himself; but aloud he said nothing.

During the week which followed he had a good opportunity of testing the affection of his relatives, who by no means behaved alike. Grace came for a few hours every day, with flowers and more substantial gifts in the way of jelly and fruit; and she always brought her sewing and sat beside him, working busily for two or three hours. Maude came occasionally, and chatted merrily and smiled on her "poor, dear uncle," and finally took her departure, "lest she should weary him." Gerald did not put in an appearance at all, and his uncle did not fail

to notice the lack of attention on his part, though he made no complaint to the others about it.

Then, at length, the doctor gave him permission to come downstairs, and he found himself comfortably ensconced in a large armchair, opposite old Job, by the brightest of bright fires.

"It is so much warmer for you here, and more cheerful, too, I think, than it would be in the best parlor," said Mrs. Turner, apologetically. She would like to have given him the very best in her power, but old Job had stoutly refused to allow her to light another fire "when coals were so dear and times so bad," so she was trying to make the most of what she had to offer.

"I guess I should have been vexed if you had put me anywhere but where you sit yourselves," said Uncle Jack. However, he found the near neighborhood of Job was not by any means enlivening, and often wished himself back in his bedroom with Grace sewing beside him. But she still came every day, and he liked to see how old Job "brightened up" and was in his best mood before her. Some one else "brightened up," too, and was at his best, also, when the girl came in; and her uncle was not slow to notice it. He did not, either, fail to perceive the radiant happiness in Grace's looks when she and George were together. Uncle Jack could put two and two together as well as any man.

He could not help admiring the extreme patience with which George always bore his father's complaints, sometimes leveled against himself, the late storm, the bad prospects of farmers, and things in general. Job was never at a loss for a text.

"I expect the young man has a pretty rough life of it, at times," thought he; "seems to bear up patiently, too;

has some real grit in him, and no mistake! I expect Job's wife hasn't a bed of roses to lie on, either; but there, perhaps she's used to it, and I daresay her husband has some good points in him, after all."

When he was strong enough to go out, Uncle Jack suggested that George should show him over the farm, and this the latter readily consented to do.

Hartley was not impressed by the condition of things on the farm. It was very plain that George was not allowed a free hand in its management. Everything bore traces of a strictly conservative mind; old-fashioned implements, old-fashioned ways were still in vogue on the whole place.

"My father and I," said the young man, as if in answer to his thoughts, "don't quite agree in our ideas on agriculture. He thinks I am too go-ahead and fond of change, and I—"

"I suppose you would like to go in for all the newest theories," interrupted the other.

"Some of them, at all events," replied George, without, however, showing the least trace of bitterness or disappointment in his tone.

"Pretty happy here, on the whole?" asked Hartley, somewhat brusquely and certainly most irrelevantly, after a slight pause.

"Well, I should feel happier if I had a little more to do. I have been trained for a land-agent's place, but, unfortunately, owing to my father's constant attacks of rheumatism, I don't feel justified in leaving home altogether. And there is not enough for me to do in looking after this farm, even when I put in a few days plowing, or work like that, at times."

"Especially when your father is still practically manager?" hazarded Hartley.

"Well, if you put it like that," returned the other, pleasantly.

"And what would you like to get in order to fill up your time?"

"Oh, a place as land-agent quite in the neighborhood, so that I could give an eye to things here, or even live at home as usual."

"Ah! I see. But such places are not to be had every day, I should fancy," replied Uncle Jack. "But something may turn up. Yes," he said, hopefully, "you keep on looking out, and something will be sure to turn up."

"There are so few changes in the neighborhood," said George, wondering a little at his tone. "But now I am sure you have walked far enough, and we must go in."

A day or two after that Hartley returned to Willow Cottage, with a very grateful and kindly feeling toward the mother and son at the Old Grange, and also toward Grace, who had done so much to make his stay there pleasant.

As for Gerald, he quite absolved him in his mind from possessing any knowledge of the dangerous condition of the bridge, which had proved so treacherous and had been the cause of so much suffering to himself. He imagined that, although so near, his nephew had not intended to cross it that morning, or that, having crossed it in safety, he had naturally concluded it would prove safe for others. Never for one moment did the suspicion cross his mind that Gerald was fully aware at the time he met him of the danger that threatened any one who should venture to cross the damaged structure. Such a suspicion the ex-American's generous mind would have

rejected with scorn. It would have been too incredible that his own nephew would have been guilty of such cold-blooded treachery.

But the young man's behavior in so persistently staying away from him looked strange; and it was eventually Gerald himself who opened his uncle's eyes to the truth and betrayed his guilty secret.

Gerald, judging his uncle by himself, imagined that the elder Hartley was firmly convinced that he had deliberately, by his guilty silence, lured him on to his dire accident. And by his altered manner, in consequence of thinking thus, he unconsciously betrayed himself.

There is an old Latin proverb which says: "*Odisse quem læseris.*" ("You hate the man you have wronged.") And we learn from Scripture that Saul hated David, after he had made one or two attempts on the young man's life. In "Nicholas Nickelby" Dickens says, in exemplification of the same proverb: "When it is remembered that Sir Mulberry Hawk had plundered, duped, deceived and foiled his pupil in every possible way, it will not be wondered at that, *beginning to hate him*, he began to hate him cordially."

Gerald had entertained a feeling of dislike for his uncle from the very first, and, as time went on, this dislike had increased in intensity, until, at length, it had grown into positive hatred.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SQUIRE'S VIEWS.

“Love like a shadow flies when substance love pursues;
Pursuing that that flies, and flying what pursues.”

—SHAKESPEARE. *Merry Wives of Windsor.*

AS WE have seen from the very beginning of their acquaintance, the Inghams had been very friendly with the Hartleys. The young people found great pleasure in each other's society, and Mrs. Ingham liked the whole family very much. Only the squire did not “take to” them at all. In fact, he barely tolerated the new friends his wife and children had found. And after the first few weeks his toleration gave place to a strong feeling of dislike at the intimacy which seemed every day to grow stronger. He was not backward in expressing his views to Mrs. Ingham.

“I'll tell you what it is, Sophia,” he said one morning to his wife, on hearing that Kate and Eustace had gone off on some walking expedition with Maude and Gerald Hartley, “you encourage these young people to come here a great deal too much. Look at Gerald, he's an idle, worthless young fellow, loafing about all day and sponging on his mother. From what I hear they are very badly off; in fact, they must be, or that young Jack would not have to work for that low Radical paper at Rushton. And if so, why doesn't the other stir himself? I suppose he is too proud to do any kind of work because he's a Hartley and related to Lord Granton. Well, if Lord Granton won't take the trouble to remember his re-

lations—and I really don't see why he should—let the young fellow pocket his pride and try to do something for an honest living. Birth is all very well, but honesty is better; and I hear he's getting into debt all over the place."

"Ah! my dear, you mustn't believe all you hear," his wife interposed, gently. "I'm sure young Mr. Hartley seems very fond of his mother and sisters. He would never hurt them by any extravagance, surely."

"I don't know about that," replied the squire, hotly. "Some young people are so abominably selfish, and think of nothing but their own pleasure and the gratification of their own tastes."

The squire himself had never been a model of self-denial, nor one who placed his own pleasures last, as every one who lived with him knew well; but then *his* character was not under discussion just then. He had his own son in view, too, when he spoke of the selfishness of the young people of the present day. Eustace hardly seemed inclined to enter into the arrangements for his marriage which his father had once or twice suggested to him.

The squire earnestly desired that his son should make an offer of marriage to the daughter of a neighboring landowner. But, so far, Eustace had been deaf to all his hints, and the father fancied that, since the arrival of Maude Hartley, his disinclination to discuss the subject of Mary Wright and her fortune had increased rather than diminished. Maude's personal charms seemed to have more attraction over him than Mary Wright's many thousands. But these were absolutely necessary, unless that part of the property which was heavily mortgaged was to pass into the hands of strangers.

"You know," the squire went on, in a peevish tone, "what a splendid chance Eustace has now of saving most of the estate. Wright is on my side, and I don't think the young lady is likely to prove unreasonable—she has been well brought up—but, of course, if he proves obstinate the whole scheme falls to the ground."

"But I don't see exactly what all this has to do with our young friends," suggested his wife, timidly.

"Don't you, Sophia? Then you must be willfully blind," cried the squire, passionately. "You know my wishes and your son's best interests, and you deliberately encourage him to fall into temptation. Can't you see that he is half in love with the younger Miss Hartley? At any rate, he admires her extremely; shows his good taste, too, for, after all, she is a very charming girl. But in his case he can't afford to marry merely for love, however charming the young lady may be."

"Perhaps, my dear, if you were to give him a hint," began Mrs. Ingham, "if you really think there is any danger—"

"Give him a hint!" shouted her husband. "Just the very thing to spoil everything. He'd turn pig-headed at once, suddenly discover that he was over head and ears in love with the girl; fancy himself a martyr and me a tyrant. Oh, dear, what a fool I was not to foresee all this bother from the very first!"

"But, my dear, you can't keep the young people apart."

"No; but you needn't, as it were, throw them into each other's arms. Especially in these days when parents seem to lose all authority over their children. But it's all the fault of this low radical, democratic age. School boards for education, science lectures, the extension of the franchise, and all these other quack medicines are

simply ruining the country. There's no respect for authority left. One man's as good as another, the workingman is better than his master. When I was a boy we were taught to order ourselves lowly and reverently to all our betters, among others our parents. Now, when you want your children to do their duty and carry out your wishes, they maunder on about 'marrying for love,' or the liberty of the subject."

Mrs. Ingham said nothing. Perhaps she knew that, in the squire's mood, "the less said the better."

Presently he began again. "And then there's Kate. What could induce you to encourage that young Hartley here, when you know how fond girls are of a handsome face? Heaven knows what may be going on when they are so much together! Kate can be as obstinate as a mule, as you know. I wish to goodness one could lock girls up till one had a husband ready for them. There's something good in convents, after all."

Then, after another slight pause, in which he seemed to be meditating upon the possibility of finding some good modern substitute for a nunnery, he continued: "I wish we could find a reasonable excuse for putting an end to this absurd, this dangerous intimacy between all these young idiots. Thank goodness, we've arranged to go abroad for a time! I hate foreign parts and foreigners, as you know—in fact, there's no place worth living in except England; but I'd stand any discomfort in order to keep Eustace and Kate out of temptation. And, if he does not stay with us all the time, I'll take care he doesn't stay here. I'll shut the place up first."

It was shortly after Uncle Jack's arrival at Marburn that the Inghams carried out this project of going abroad. Besides his wish to keep the young people of the

two families apart, the squire had motives of economy as well. It was so much cheaper living in some little quiet French or German town than at home, where you were obliged, as he said, to keep up a certain establishment. His finances had been in a very bad state for a long time, but, like many other people of extravagant habits, his fit of economy had seized him rather too late to be of much service. It was like locking the stable door after the steed had been stolen.

The Hartleys, all except Grace, heard of this intended journey of their friends at the Hall with feelings akin to dismay. It was disagreeable to lose almost their only friends and companions for such a lengthened period.

"That's always the way," sighed Maude, "as soon as ever you really get to know and like people something is sure to happen to separate you. Either they get married, or they go abroad, or fail, or do something equally horrid. How many friends did we lose at Beckford in some of these ways?"

"The moral is," said Grace, with a smile, "don't depend too much upon friends for your happiness."

"Oh! that's like one of Uncle Jack's speeches," said Maude. "Let me see, what did he say last time he was here? Oh! I remember. We ought not to depend for our happiness on other people. Everybody should have sufficient resources in themselves, and so on."

"Well, perhaps it isn't always for our own happiness to get to know people too well," replied Grace, gently, with a significant look at Maude.

Maude colored vividly. She knew what Grace meant. And, indeed, she had often asked herself of late what would be the end of her friendship with Eustace Ingham

—happiness or misery? Almost before she was aware of it, her heart had passed out of her keeping. She was no longer “fancy free.” Yes, she tremblingly whispered to herself, while a faint blush mantled her cheeks, she did love Eustace Ingham, and she hoped, nay, thought, that he cared for her.

But what of the squire? How would he regard any engagement between herself and Eustace? Would he ever sanction it? Maude was fain to confess that she had little hope of that. Of late, without being rude, or even markedly inhospitable, something in his manner plainly showed the girl that her presence at the Hall was not altogether pleasing to its owner. There was a decided lack of warmth in his welcome, an absence of regret at leave-taking. He never seconded any invitation given by Mrs. Ingham or the others; never suggested any little plan for their amusement, and, indeed, at times plainly discouraged some of their schemes for a day’s excursion in the neighborhood, or a ride or drive together.

Once or twice—how vividly she remembered his words!—he had lamented his poverty, and deplored the fact that poor people like themselves had to follow the path of necessity rather than of inclination. His son, he had added, would find himself practically a poor man, unless he were to marry a rich wife; and much more in the same strain.

But at eighteen a girl is more inclined to dwell upon the immediate present, rather than the more distant future; or, if the latter will force itself upon her mind, to fondly hope that it may correspond to her most ardent wishes. So Maude felt more disturbed by the thought of the temporary absence of young Ingham than by any apprehensions that the future might bring a separation

of a more lasting character. As Grace, however, was not in her confidence, she kept her feelings to herself.

Grace, on the other hand, was secretly delighted at the thought that the Inghams were about to leave the Hall for an indefinite period. For she had plainly seen that her sister was not indifferent to Eustace Ingham. She liked him and took great pleasure in his society. In his presence she was always at her best, wore her sunniest smiles and gave the fullest play to her natural gayety of spirit. At such times she was most attractive, and Grace saw that Eustace *was* attracted and found a charm in her society. His looks, his manner toward her, his anxiety to consult and gratify her tastes showed that very plainly. But Grace knew that the young people were living in a fool's paradise. The squire would never give his consent to their marriage, and without that consent Maude would never yield to Eustace's wishes, even if he were disposed to defy his father. Maude was too high-spirited to enter a family unwelcomed and unloved. Grace, therefore, thought this enforced separation of her sister and Eustace Ingham would not be at all a bad thing. What might not happen before they met again? There was, too, the hope that a temporary absence from each other might tend to weaken their mutual regard and liking. There was the possibility in Ingham's case that other and newer attractions might, in some measure, eradicate the influence of those whom he had left at home. And even Maude might change and find that she loved where love might not be forbidden and consequently hopeless.

Such were some of the consoling thoughts that ran through Grace's mind at hearing of the intended departure of her newly made friends. And it was exactly in

accordance with her nature to consider the matter as it affected others rather than herself. For, indeed, she would be the loser when the Hall was shut up. She liked its inmates; yes, even the squire. But then *she* could find something to admire in almost everybody; at least, so her friends said.

As for Gerald, he was loud in his lamentations, and not without cause. It was nice to have a horse placed at his disposal whenever he felt inclined for a ride. It was nice to have the run of the Hall estate; there was generally something in the way of sport to be obtained by land or water. And even a good dinner was not to be despised. Besides, it was nice to be appreciated by people like the Inghams. Gerald, however, would hardly have felt flattered if he knew how much he owed to his sister Maude. That he was her brother had a great deal to do with the way in which Eustace, at least, treated him. He might have lost some of his self-esteem had he divined the truth. This, by the way, would have done him good.

"Awful bore, this sudden freak of the squire's," lamented he to his sisters. "Not sudden, you say? Oh, well, awful bore all the same. Almost the only decent people in the neighborhood. And just as you get to know them off they go. Really too bad! Of course, it doesn't matter so much to you girls. You can always find something to do at home—sewing, or reading, or practicing your music, or cooking, if you like—but a man, you know, wants something outside."

Grace thought that he might easily find something outside besides amusement if he were disposed to do so. But she did not always express her feelings.

Maude was less reticent. "That's very kind of you,"

she cried, "and just like a man—and a brother. I wouldn't confess I were so selfish if I were you. *We* can find plenty of amusement and distraction in work! Why don't *you* try that for a change?—a little work should be a welcome change after such a long playtime."

Maude could be bitter when she allowed her feelings fair play, much as she idolized and helped to spoil her brother.

But Gerald never professed to feel the sting in her sharp speeches; now he appeared calm and amused as he answered: "My dear child, don't be in such a hurry and excite yourself. Is it my fault that Granton keeps me waiting so long? Would you have me write and tell him he is to hurry up, I can't wait any longer? Or shall I go and ask some of the grocers or drapers at Rushton to give me a place behind their counters, and then tell his lordship that I have obtained agreeable and remunerative employment?"

"Perhaps if you wrote and told him you intended to enter the grocery, or even pork-butchery line, it might tend to make him a little more eager to help you," said Maude, with a laugh. Her ill temper was seldom lasting, especially when anything ridiculous came before her.

"Well, there's something in that," drawled Gerald. "It's a hint that is not to be despised. But, now, once more I say it's an awful bore that the Inghams are going away. Let us hope, however, that they will soon get tired of 'furn parts,' and then come back again to old England and—us."

Accidents of time and place, however, are not the only things which separate one man from another. Next—

door neighbors may be more effectually parted than persons who each occupy a different hemisphere.

CHAPTER XIV.

A CHANCE FOR GERALD.

“Handsome is that handsome does.”

—GOLDSMITH.

It was the end of July, and the Inghams had been gone two months. Gerald was still daily expecting a letter from Lord Granton, with the offer of some post under the Government, when he received a very different offer from a very different source.

A letter came from a firm of London solicitors, stating that a client of theirs, who was under certain obligations to the late Captain Hartley, was desirous, if possible, of repaying them by aiding his son, who, he was given to understand, was on the lookout for some suitable employment. Their client proposed, therefore, that Mr. Hartley should proceed to some agricultural college where all his expenses would be paid for the space of at least two years. At the expiration of that time a post of agent on an estate, with a small salary to begin with, would be offered him. It must be understood, however, that Mr. Hartley would endeavor to the utmost of his ability to qualify himself for the situation. The strictest inquiries would be made at certain intervals as to the progress he was making in his studies at the said college. In case these reports were satisfactory, in addi-

tion to the defrayal of his expenses the sum of fifty pounds a year for personal expenses would be allowed. If, however, at the end of a year his progress and zeal for his work should not be reported as satisfactory, all help would immediately be withdrawn. Mr. Hartley, they went on to say, would oblige them by not making any inquiries as to the name of their client, and also by giving them an answer at his earliest convenience.

"What a splendid offer!" cried Maude, rapturously, as she finished reading aloud the letter, which Gerald had passed on to her. "Why, Gerald, your fortune is made! A land-agent may make a thousand a year on a good estate."

"Yes, and deserves it all, too," replied Gerald, ungraciously. He was by no means delighted with the offer which had been made to him.

"I wonder whoever it can be," said Mrs. Hartley, in a tone of surprise.

"Oh, somebody father helped," said Gerald, "or, more probably, somebody who helped to ruin him. It's an offer made as a sort of sop to some one's conscience."

"Well, you have nothing to do with that," interposed Grace, dreading the tone of her brother's remarks.

"I think I have everything to do with it," he retorted. "I shouldn't like to feel under any obligation to some scheming scoundrel."

"But, Gerald, love, you will not decide hastily," pleaded his mother, fearful lest he should, on the spur of the moment, reject this offer which appeared to her a most generous one.

"No, I shan't do anything in a hurry," replied Gerald; "but, all the same, I think my mind is made up even

now." Then, to avoid further discussion, he left the room.

"Grace," said Mrs. Hartley, who was almost in tears at his behavior, "do run down to your uncle's and ask him to come up. He may be able to persuade Gerald to accept this offer."

"Oh, I will go, mother, dear, if you wish it, of course. But I don't know that it is exactly wise to ask Uncle Jack to interfere. Unfortunately, he and Gerald don't get on together. Besides, if Gerald is inclined to be obstinate nobody will ever persuade him to do what we wish."

"Yes, and if we did persuade him against his own inclinations," interposed Maude, angrily, "he would pose as a martyr at once, an unwilling one, too—and they never do any good in the world. Really, I do get out of patience with him sometimes. Oh, why doesn't Lord Granton write one way or another and let him know what he has to expect?"

This was a bitter speech for Maude to make about her brother, but the uncertainty hanging over her own prospects, combined with her separation from the man she loved, hardly tended to improve either her spirits or her temper. And, latterly, Gerald had been more trying and selfish than ever.

Grace went off to her Uncle Jack, and explained what her mother wished him to do.

"So Gerald has had a good offer made to him, eh? Well, I hope he will have sense enough to know it's a good one. Such a chance might never be given him again. But, my dear, I really think *I* had better, nay, I will say that *we* had better not interfere. For I am sure of this, although I don't like to say it of your brother and my

nephew, if he won't do right for his own sake he won't do it for the sake of any one else. Now, I won't talk any more about that just now or I might say more than I ought. Tell your mother I'll come down to Ivy Cottage, and, if Gerald chooses to ask my advice, why, then I'll give it, but not without." And he shook his head in a decided manner.

In the meantime Gerald had hurried off to consult his friend Crossland, or, rather, perhaps to obtain from him arguments with which to defend his intended refusal of the offer. For, like many people who ask the advice of others, Gerald did not intend to take it unless it coincided with his own desires.

"What do I advise, Gerald," Crossland replied, in answer to the young man's questions. "Well, really, you must excuse my giving you any advice in the matter at all. It is a dangerous task advising people. In fact, I can't afford to lose friends by attempting to do so. It is so easy and natural to retort, if things don't turn out as we hope: 'You advised me against my own feelings and better judgment.' But listen," he went on, seeing an ugly look on Gerald's face, "I don't say if I were in your place I should accept the offer, but I do say if I were circumstanced like you I would accept it—jump at it on the spot. But then, you know, I haven't a noble relative like Lord Granton to fall back on."

Gerald was far too full of self-esteem and a sense of his own dignity to notice the ill-disguised sneer which accompanied these words.

Crossland was much too selfish to think seriously of any one's interests but his own. This visit of Gerald's placed him, therefore, in rather a difficult position. He didn't wish Gerald to leave just then. His presence at

home gave him a ready excuse for frequent visits at Ivy Cottage. But he dared not advise his rejecting the offer he had just received for fear of going against what he knew were the wishes of all the young man's people. They would be seriously displeased with him if, by his influence, Gerald threw away this chance which had been so unexpectedly given him. However, without seeming to influence him, and certainly without giving him what might be called advice, he did materially influence him. His remark about the noble relative in the background added weight to Gerald's half-formed determination to say "No" to his unknown friend.

The next day he announced his decision to his mother and sisters. Jack had gone to his work.

"I'm not going to accept the offer this unknown individual has made me," he said, bluntly.

"Oh, Gerald!" cried the others, simultaneously, looking at him with much reproach.

"No, I couldn't think of it," he went on. "It seems to me that for two years I should be merely a genteel clodhopper; something like George Turner," he added, with a sneer.

Grace colored and looked extremely vexed. Maude noticed it, and exclaimed, warmly: "George Turner is a gentleman, Gerald, and you've no right to sneer at him because he does all sorts of farmwork to please his poor old father. I honor him for it."

"I have no fancy to follow the plow," Gerald continued, "and I suppose that would be in the programme. As for cattle, I never could feel interested in them as live stock. As prospective articles of food they are all very well—portions of them, that is. No, I never could take to farming, and I don't mean to," he added, doggedly.

"Besides, I should be a fool to accept this offer when any moment I may hear from Granton. He can't throw me over after keeping me in suspense so long. When his offer comes it will be something worth having, you may be sure of that. He will offer me work that any one might be proud to accept." This in a very dignified tone.

His mother and sisters sat as if stunned. They had little faith in Lord Granton's ability to find any suitable work for Gerald. He was not in the Government, and places were not given away now as in former times. These were the days of severe public competition.

The offer which Gerald sneered at provided something certain and tangible, something in the immediate future, as well as a post of honor and value at a more distant period.

Although Uncle Jack would not try to persuade his nephew to accept the offer which had been made him, he felt it his duty to remonstrate pretty freely with him after he had refused to accept it. There was the future to be considered. A word of advice, warning or remonstrance at the present moment might have some weight hereafter.

"I'm sorry to hear, Gerald, you couldn't see your way to qualify yourself for becoming a land-agent, or steward, or whatever it is that you had the chance of becoming some time or other," he said.

"Well, I didn't see my way to do it," replied Gerald, hotly.

"No, that's just what I said," rejoined his uncle, calmly, "and, I repeat, I'm sorry you didn't, both for your sake and for the sake of others."

"I don't exactly see that you are one of the others," retorted Gerald.

"Well, no, I can't say that your refusal will affect me directly. I shan't be any the poorer for your decision, but I should think you might have considered a little the interests of your mother and sisters."

"I'm not going to turn plowboy and farmer to please any one," cried Gerald, incensed at his uncle's interference with his affairs.

"You might do even worse than turn plowboy; in fact, you are doing worse now," said his uncle, and he looked significantly at him.

"Perhaps you will allow us to manage our own affairs," sneered Gerald. "I don't think your interference will tend to improve them. Apparently, it does not appear as if you had been too successful in managing your own," and he looked defiantly at his uncle.

The latter kept his temper admirably under such provoking circumstances. It takes two to make a quarrel.

"Well, we can't always command success," he remarked, quietly, "however much we may strive to win, or even deserve it. But my affairs are not under consideration just now, and I want to say a word about yours. It's time somebody gave you a little advice. It seems you are too proud to enter an office to earn an honest living, but you are not too proud to live at home, sponging on your mother and sisters. Unlike the man in the parable, you are not ashamed to beg, although you won't dig. No; hear me out," he went on, hurriedly, as his nephew seemed about to interrupt him. "You would scorn to do the work that Jack is doing, but you have no hesitation about living on his earnings. You take care to be well dressed, but you don't mind how shabby your sisters go."

"I will not stay and listen to such insults," began Ger-

ald, furiously. "Even if you are my uncle you've no business—"

"To interfere?" suggested his uncle, as he hesitated. "Well, I've made it my business for your poor mother's sake. And pray don't talk about insults. You know it's the plain truth I'm saying, and nothing else," and he looked fixedly at Gerald, who was too full of rage to attempt any further reply just then. "How much longer are you going to loaf about here in idleness?" asked his uncle, sternly. "Till you find just the work you think suitable for you? Pray what do you think you are fit for? You know how to ride—a little, that is—and shoot, perhaps less, and I suppose you haven't forgotten already all the Latin and Greek you once learned. But that's a slender lot of acquirements to begin life with."

"You know I was going into the army," replied Gerald, sulkily, by way of making some excuse for himself.

"You were going into the army? Well, I haven't much opinion of soldiering as a trade, but I suppose that till this world gets wiser and better soldiers will be necessary. But still, it's better than idling away your life here, and so I ask why don't you go into the army?"

"You know I can't afford to enter a military college, it is so expensive," began Gerald, when his uncle interrupted him.

"No, perhaps not," he said; "but you can go into the army, all the same."

"You mean as a common soldier?" cried the young man, in disgust. "Enlist! Perhaps have to act as some one's servant!" and a horrified look passed over his face.

"Oh! I see," retorted Uncle Jack, "you want to begin at the top of the tree. You must be master, it seems. Let me tell you, young man, whatever trade or profes-

sion you enter you'll find a master over you ; somebody you'll have to obey. Ay, and let me add this, there's many a better man than you in the army in a private's uniform, men of better birth, cleverer and of better character," he added.

"Enlist as a private soldier !" exclaimed his nephew, disgustedly.

"Yes, enlist as a private soldier. Why, it might be the making of you. You'd get a little stupid pride and conceit taken out of you."

"That would be better than staying here to be continually insulted," remarked Gerald, bitterly.

"No, my lad, God forbid I should wish to insult, as you call it, any one. I'm not trying to wound you, but to stir you up to try and be and do something you might feel proud of," and a tinge of sadness came into his words, while a pitying look overspread his face.

For the moment Gerald felt touched. A sense of shame stole into his heart. Conscience confirmed even the sharpest words Uncle Jack had been saying.

"I hope I shall have the chance soon of doing something I really like," he faltered.

"You are still building on my Cousin Granton's promises, my lad?" his uncle asked, in not unkindly tones. "Unhappy is the man who trusts too much to the promises of the great, or lives on their smiles ! He may end by eating his heart out in weary waiting and despair. They say, indeed, Granton is a good-natured man ; but he may not have the power to do much for you."

"Well, he promised to find me something," replied Gerald, eagerly.

"Did he?" asked Uncle Jack, quietly ; "then he'll keep his word. But don't expect too much, and don't throw

away the best chance you may ever have because you are hoping for something in that quarter."

Then Uncle Jack left him. Like a sensible man, he knew how far to go, and was quite satisfied with having made some impression upon his nephew. Further discussion might simply tend to weaken the effect produced. As for Gerald, for a time, at least, he felt more drawn to his uncle than ever before. During their late interview he had recognized that there was a dignity in his relative, in spite of his simple dress, which was not unworthy of a Hartley. Moreover, he possessed a knowledge of men and things which did not fail to inspire his nephew with a certain feeling of respect. Perhaps for the first time he began to ask himself how it was that Uncle Jack, from a worldly point of view, had made such a failure of his life. He was eminently active, industrious, temperate, persevering, master of many arts, and he had, besides, an intimate knowledge of the world. Above all, he was a man of sound judgment and infinite tact. In fact, just the man to get on. How, then, had he, notwithstanding so many advantages, made shipwreck of fortune?

But conjecture was in vain. And, beyond stating how many callings he had exercised in the past, Uncle Jack was singularly reticent as to his history.

CHAPTER XV.

UNCLE JACK'S SPEECH.

"Fine thoughts are wealth, for the right use of which
Men are and ought to be accountable,
If not to thee, to those they influence.
Grant this, we pray thee, and that all who read,
Or utter noble thoughts may make them theirs,
And thank God for them, to the betterment
Of their succeeding life; that all who lead
The general sense and taste, too apt, perchance,
To be led, keep in mind the mighty good
They may achieve, and are in conscience bound,
And duty to attempt unceasingly to compass."

—BAILEY'S *Festus*.

ALTHOUGH Uncle Jack had lived for so many years in the States under a republican form of government, he had by no means returned to England a republican in his political views. He had not the slightest wish to see the Queen deposed in favor of a president. As he said, England was a republic in all but name. The people really governed. The Queen was merely an ornamental figurehead placed in the forefront of the Ship of State; the people, like the helmsman, really guided the vessel. So long as that was the case he was perfectly contented to allow matters to remain as they were. As a matter of fact, the British sovereign had really less power than the President of the United States. He put the matter epigrammatically thus: The sovereign reigns, but does not govern; the President governs, but does not reign. But, of course, he admitted that this was only true within certain limits and with certain modifications.

After he had been at Marburn a considerable time, and while the squire was still abroad, the dissolution of Parliament and consequent new election came within measurable distance. Ardent politicians on both sides began to prepare for the fray. Rushton was not behindhand. The Rushton division was represented at that time by a Radical. At the approaching election the Conservatives hoped to replace him by one of their own color—politically speaking, that is. The Radicals, on the other hand, felt equally confident that their candidate would maintain his position at the head of the poll. Some weeks before the dissolution each candidate began to bring himself prominently before the Rushton electors, just, as it were, to remind them of the approaching contest. Each candidate naturally assured the electors that the only possible salvation for the country consisted in their returning to power a Government of his own particular way of thinking. This, of course, was a most unselfish way of putting it. Each candidate seemed to eliminate the personal element as far as possible. The safety of the country, and that alone, was the object they had in view while soliciting the votes of the constituency.

Uncle Jack's short tenancy of Willow Cottage had not qualified him for a vote; to a certain extent, therefore, he could assist neither party. But it was hardly to be expected that he intended to remain merely an idle spectator of the fight. Even if he had no vote, he intended to lift up his voice on behalf of what he considered the truth. And each party desired to have the influence of his voice on their side. For Uncle Jack had already obtained notoriety as an interesting and effective speaker. Both at Rushton and Marburn he had often appeared on a public platform, sometimes as lecturer,

but more frequently as a speaker on behalf of some measure likely to benefit the town and neighborhood. Each party hoped that he belonged to it. Politically speaking, he was, as the sporting papers say, "a dark horse," for if on some occasions he had expressed views which seemed strongly to favor the Radicals, on others he had promulgated ideas which the Tories considered eminently sound and orthodox.

On more than one occasion Maude had rallied him on being what she called a sort of political cameleon, a waverer, a halter between two opinions.

"Now, what are you really, uncle?" she asked him one day, shortly before the first of these political meetings was to be held at Rushton, "a Liberal or a Tory?"

"Well, dear," replied he, laughingly, "I don't call myself either. I object to being labeled with the ticket of either party. I won't swallow every article in any political creed. I prefer to be perfectly independent, and if I had a vote I should give it to the man who would support the most useful measures—measures not benefiting merely one party or section, but the community as a whole."

"I can't say I care for politics," said Crossland, who happened to be present. "I think it's so undignified for a gentleman to go touting about the country begging Tom, Dick and Harry to give him their votes. Fancy having to do the civil to all the petty tradespeople and greasy farm-laborers, simply because they happen to have a vote. I think a gentleman might find something better to do, and leave such dirty work to low-bred people with voices as loud as their manners."

"I agree with you," said Gerald, who was becoming more and more influenced by his friend—so much so now,

indeed, that he was ready to forget even that enthusiastic Toryism which had once been dear to him—"such work is debasing. You can't touch pitch without being defiled. A gentleman ought not to have such work to do."

"It seems to me, Gerald," said his uncle, aside, while Crossland was making some parting speech to Maude—he generally found it convenient to go when Uncle Jack came in the room—"you narrow very considerably the work which a gentleman may do without compromising his dignity. You have already shown in a very practical manner some things he may not do." Gerald colored at these words; he knew exactly what his uncle meant by them. "And now to that list you add entering political life—serving his country in Parliament."

"But you must admit, uncle," said Maude, with a little sigh of relief as the door closed on Crossland, for whose prolonged society she had no wish, "a candidate may have a great deal of dirty work to do."

"If by dirty you mean unpleasant work I freely admit it, but he is not obliged to soil either his hands or his conscience in doing it. I mean by giving bribes, or making promises which he knows cannot be kept."

There was a pause for a few moments, and then he went on in excited tones, almost fancying himself on a public platform: "Who ought to help in ruling the destinies of a great country like this? Why, the very best men you can find; the best in every sense of the word. The men whose ancestors fought and bled for it, centuries ago, on many a field of battle; whose forefathers won for us from king and people civil and religious liberty, who in the great council chambers of the nation helped to make by slow degrees that Constitution which is perhaps the most perfect the world ever saw; the men

who helped to give us those wise laws which make and keep us a great nation. It is the descendants of such men as these who ought to help in preserving and improving such a glorious heritage. Who should take their share in ruling this country? Why, the men who are wisest and cleverest, who are keen-sighted enough to discern the evils which oppress certain classes, and unselfish enough to wish to remove them. The men who have brains, the men who have leisure, and, to put it, perhaps selfishly, the men who have the highest interests and the best stake in the prosperity of their country. For these to stand idly by and leave the work to others is to act the part of cowards and traitors, of men who are unworthy the name of Englishmen and patriots."

"Bravo! bravo! uncle," cried Maude, as he paused, fairly out of breath with his little oration. "I didn't know you could speak like that. Why, you ought to be in Parliament yourself!"

"Plenty of frothy fools there, as it is, without me," he muttered, as if ashamed of his outburst. "It isn't always the talking man who does the most good in the House, or anywhere else."

"It is really quite a pity, uncle, that you have but such a little stake in the country," Gerald observed, sarcastically, "or you might feel called upon to offer your services as a candidate—the Independent candidate for the Rushton division."

Maude looked reproachfully at her brother; she was ashamed of his rude, ill-natured remark.

But Uncle Jack, calmly ignoring its tone, merely laughed, saying that possibly he might make as good a member as many who were aspiring to that position.

Not long after this conversation he had an opportunity

of airing these and similar opinions in public. The Radical member for the division was coming down to address his constituents and, as it were, show them his programme for the ensuing election. Uncle Jack went to the meeting, and, on the invitation of some of the committee, mounted the platform and took his seat somewhat behind Mr. Duncan, the M. P.

The Radical candidate had a most extensive and, as some considered, most appetizing bill of fare to set before his audience: Disestablishment of the Church; universal suffrage, male and female; payment of members; reform, if not abolition, of the House of Lords; triennial Parliaments—all these formed items in the political menu.

Other speakers followed the candidate, most of them agreeing completely with their champion. Then, in answer to repeated cries, Hartley arose.

He began by saying that as they had expressed a wish to hear him, he felt confident that they would listen to him patiently, even if they dissented from some of the remarks he made. As Liberals they valued, of course, liberty of speech, especially on a public platform, at a public meeting.

Then he made a long speech, a discursive speech, and what nearly every one in the audience considered a most unsatisfactory speech. And, indeed, it pleased but very few. The Radicals were disappointed with it because it condemned in no halting terms so many of the pet articles of their creed. The few Tories present regarded it as most revolutionary in its sentiments. It was too Radical for some, too Conservative for others. Each party regarded the points in which the speaker differed from them rather than the points in which he agreed with them. Each side damned it because of its going contrary

to some of their views. Both parties considered its demerits far outweighed its merits. No man holding such opinions could ever be regarded as a good Liberal, so said one side. No man with such sentiments could ever pretend to pose as a good Conservative, so said the other.

It was plain that a poor Independent had no chance of gaining or keeping popularity in Rushton. As, however, Hartley cared absolutely nothing for popularity, public opinion hurt him but little. Henceforth, however, his advocacy was at a discount in the political world of Rushton.

"He's neither flesh, fish nor fowl," exclaimed an indignant Radical, whenever his name was afterward mentioned. "No more of him for me! Why, he's enough to ruin any cause. Fancy a man's belonging to no side. He's quite a political Ishmael."

But of course there were some good people in Rushton and the neighborhood who admired Hartley's independence of thought and expression, men who were weary of the clamor of party strife. But such were in an infinitesimal minority.

There was one individual to whom the reading of Hartley's speech gave exquisite pleasure, when it appeared in the columns of the *Rushton and Packlington Advertiser*, as it was faithfully reported by Jack, who secretly delighted in it, though he fretted a little at its limitations. Frank Crossland was, as we have seen, no politician, having quite enough to do to look after his own immediate interests, and personally *he* regarded the speech as, to use his own words, "confounded rot." But he was enraptured with it because of the effect he foresaw it would probably have in a certain quarter.

He posted a copy of the newspaper with his own hands to Squire Ingham.

"I wonder what the squire will think of his new tenant's political vagaries?" thought he, as he sent off the paper. "I rather think there will be a little explosion damaging to certain friendships—that is, if I know the old squire."

Crossland was no false prophet.

There was an explosion on the squire's part, after he had read the account of the meeting and Hartley's speech. And yet his anger was not unmingled with satisfaction, for now he had a good cause for issuing an order which, until that moment, he had shrunk from giving.

"Hartley—Hartley! who is this Hartley, Eustace?" he asked of his son, as they all sat together at breakfast. "Is not that the name of the fellow who took Willow Cottage, where Betty Jones lived so long?"

"Yes, I suppose it's the same name," answered Eustace, greatly dreading, however, what might follow.

"Then I wish to goodness," cried his father, furiously, "that you would exercise a little more judgment in letting my property. Pretty idea, having a political fire-brand like this pestilent fellow actually living on one's own property! A nice example to set the other tenants. No wonder the country is going to the dogs, when such demagogues go spouting about!"

"My dear father," said Eustace, "I must repeat what I have said to you before on this subject. Nowadays people won't stand any interference with their opinions on the part of landlords."

"Interference, sir! no, you don't want to interfere. All you have to say is: 'You're a confounded Radical,

and so you shan't live on my property.' That's the way I used to serve them when they came to me."

"Well, just now it is not so easy to get tenants on any terms, and if once we begin to draw a line at a man's views, why, we should soon have half the property unlet."

"Unlet!" growled the squire, by no means appeased at these words. "If such men as this Hartley get the upper hand we shan't have any property at all, even to try and let. What with Radicals, Republicans and Socialists, all preaching the doctrines of spoliation and robbery, a gentleman won't be able to call his soul his own in a few years."

"Well, papa," ventured Kate, "we have had our day, and now the people want to have theirs. Their good time is coming, they think."

"My dear Kate, perhaps you will not interfere in matters you don't understand, and—and— Yes, there is another thing I want to say. Isn't this Hartley a relation of your friends at Ivy Cottage?"

"Yes, he is their uncle."

"Ah! I thought so. Now listen to me, Sophia," and he turned to his wife. "For the future no Hartley ever crosses my threshold. Do you understand that?" and he looked round at the dismayed faces of his wife and children almost in triumph. "No doubt they are all tarred with the same brush, and I won't run the risk of having such views taught under my own roof. Do you hear, Sophia?"

"Yes, my dear, but I am sure the young people—"

"Young people or old people, it makes no difference. It was a mistake ever encouraging them. But now there shall be an end of it!" and the squire thumped the table

with his fist, making the cups and saucers rattle and the spoons jump about.

There was also another reason for his anger that morning. With a general election coming gradually nearer his presence would be required at home. He must not linger abroad while his friends in the neighborhood of Marburn were gallantly fighting for the good old cause. He, too, must buckle on his armor and exert all his influence on behalf of those principles which had ever been dear to the good old family of Ingham, of Marburn Hall. So, for the present, retrenchment abroad must be abandoned. At whatever sacrifice he must hurry home and do his duty. But having to abandon his present plan did not tend to improve his temper.

Before leaving Switzerland for home Mrs. Ingham sat down and wrote a letter to Grace Hartley, in which, as kindly and delicately as possible, she stated that the friendly intercourse which had existed between them must for the future be discontinued. Very briefly she explained the true cause of her husband's resentment, and threw all the blame on "those horrid politics," which were always setting old friends at variance and stirring up strife between members of the same family. As for herself, she would never forget her friends, even if she were unable to welcome them to her house as in bygone days. No doubt in time the squire would be angry with himself for allowing his political views to carry him to such lengths, but until then they must rest content with feeling that they were still friends, even if to others they might seem estranged, and so on.

It was a kind letter. And Grace wrote back a kindly answer, saying they were both the victims of circumstances.

But the squire's prohibition, kindly conveyed though it was, produced great consternation at Ivy Cottage.

Maude was in the depths of secret woe to think of being thus deprived of so many opportunities of meeting Eustace, whom absence had only made dearer to her loving heart. She knew the severance between the Hall and Cottage would be a trouble to him as it was to her, but he was too good and patient a son to hastily disregard his father's wishes. He would rather wait and see if time would effect some change in his father's somewhat capricious temper. But it would be hard to wait, so near each other, and yet so far apart.

As for Gerald, seeing that this extreme measure, which would deprive him of so many enjoyments and cut him adrift from Kate Ingham's society, had been brought about by the doings of his uncle, he was more furious than ever with him, and, if possible, hated him more than he had yet done, which was not a little.

CHAPTER XVI.

POACHING.

"Sin is not of the spirit, but of that
Which blindeth spirit, heart and brain."

—BAILEY'S *Festus*.

SHOOTING was one of Gerald's accomplishments—one of which he was particularly fond and in which he excelled. As he used to say, every gentleman should be able to shoot, whether he owned land or not. For a gen-

tleman must always have friends who could offer him a few days among the partridges or pheasants.

This autumn he found many opportunities for indulging in his favorite sport. Crossland gave him a day occasionally. And then some of the farmers with whom Gerald had struck up at least a sporting friendship were always ready to oblige him with the offer of a shot at the rabbits. For Gerald could make himself very agreeable, if he pleased. His handsome face, manly ways and keenness after all kinds of outdoor sports helped to make him very popular with the farmers round about. So, altogether, his gun never had time to grow rusty. If a certain ring that Maude used to wear could have spoken, it might have said something as to the means by which he obtained his gun license.

One bright morning, toward the end of September, Gerald left home in high spirits. Graham, one of the largest of the squire's tenant-farmers, had offered him a day's shooting among the partridges. He knew his prospects of a good bag were excellent; he had seen many coveys among the farmer's turnips.

Squire Ingham had, some time before, surrendered his shooting rights over this large farm, noted for its game. But the fact was that, when the fourteen years' lease on which Graham had taken the farm expired, he refused to consent to its being renewed unless the shooting in future went with the farm.

"You see," said he to Mr. Briggs, the agent, "I like a little shooting myself, and then my lads are growing up, and I have friends I like to oblige."

"But, my dear sir," returned the other, "you do get several days, both among the partridges and pheasants.

What more would you have? You can't expect to be favored more than the other tenants."

"Well, I don't want any favors. I want a right to shoot when I please. I'll give the squire a fair price for his shooting."

In fear and trembling the agent made his report to the squire. The squire's reply was more forcible than polite.

"No, certainly not!" he thundered. "What is the world coming to now? Tenants actually dictating to owners the terms of their lease! The right of shooting over the home farm, the very best bit of cover on the whole estate! Why doesn't he ask for the whole place, right out?"

"All right," said Graham, who could be as obstinate as his landlord, "then out I go." And not another word would he hear.

Not until he saw the bills announcing the sale of some of the stock, produce, etc., did the squire give way.

Mr. Briggs told him he could not afford to lose the very best tenant he had ever had. Farming was bad—farms going a-begging. Good tenants were scarce. Graham took good care of the land, worked it on scientific principles, never asked for reductions, and so on.

With a very bad grace, Mr. Ingham yielded. But the sore rankled. The home farm became for him quite a plague spot in the very midst of his property.

Gerald enjoyed himself thoroughly. Birds were plentiful, and not too wild, and the dogs worked beautifully. Altogether, he had a right good time. But, alas! the morning was not to end as pleasantly as it began. An incident happened which was destined to have a very marked influence on his future life.

He was just finishing his modest lunch, in high good

humor with himself and his immediate surroundings, including a good bag of birds, when a splendid covey arose just a few yards from where he was reclining. Before, however, he could get his gun they were out of his reach, and, to his intense disappointment, he saw them settle in a field just across the boundary line of the home farm—that is to say, on Squire Ingham's property.

For a few moments the young man stood irresolute at the fence which marked off the forbidden territory. Then he vaulted lightly over it.

They were practically Farmer Graham's birds. It was a shame to lose them, so he argued with himself. Yes, the temptation was great, and there was a spice of danger and excitement in the adventure. Perhaps, too, a little element of bravado led him on. It would be good fun to steal a march on the squire; after his sudden change of front it would be a positive pleasure to have a shot at the birds and spoil *his* sport.

It was, therefore, with curiously mixed motives that the young man stepped on to Squire Ingham's ground. The covey rose again, and this time he was not disappointed; at least two birds fell to his shot. In high glee, he was putting them in his bag when a well-known voice startled him by crying out: "Hullo! you, sir? What are you doing there?"

Looking up, he saw the squire and Watson, the head keeper, just emerging from a little spinney lying on the left of the field in which he stood. Horrified, he let the birds fall from his nerveless grasp, while the color fled from his cheeks. He was powerless to move.

"Oh! it's you, is it?" sneered the squire, who was now near enough to recognize him. "So poaching is one of the accomplishments you have learned from your 'Rad-

ical relation,' is it? But I think you'll find that game isn't quite as free here as it is in the prairies of America. Watson, take those birds, and the gun, too. We must teach this young gentleman a lesson; he's too proud to work, but not too proud to steal, it seems." And the old man uttered the words in a tone of mocking banter.

Stung by these taunts, Gerald recovered his powers of speech. "Here are the birds I shot on your property," he said, throwing them down at the squire's feet, "the others are off the home farm, and let no one try and take them from me!" cried he, defiantly, nervously fingering the lock of the gun, which he still held in his hand, while he shot a furious glance at the squire.

Watson stood irresolute. He was not afraid of blows in the discharge of his duties; but to try and wrest a loaded gun from a man in Gerald's state of mind seemed rather an excess of his legitimate work. As he said to himself: "The young varmint looked powerful vicious."

But, incensed, and not unnaturally so, as the squire was, he had sufficient discretion and self-control not to insist on Watson's carrying out his orders. He could see that Gerald, carried away by the passion of the moment, might, in self-defense, use his gun against the keeper. So he called out: "Never mind the other birds, Watson, or the gun; the young gentleman almost seems inclined to add murder to poaching."

And indeed there was a very dangerous look in Gerald's face—the look of a wild animal at bay. Disdaining any reply to the squire's last angry speech, he found, at length, words in which to make the best excuse he could for "trespassing in pursuit of game," as the wording of the law has it. "You will allow me to explain," he began, in a haughty tone, "that these birds," and he point-

ed to those lying on the ground, "came from Graham's land."

"I don't care where they came from," replied the squire, fiercely. He was by no means mollified by the mention of his obstinate tenant's name. "You are poaching on my property. And let me tell you this, young man, if it were not for your mother's sake I would have you prosecuted. But, remember, if ever you are caught again you shall smart for it," and he shook his stick in a threatening manner. "It's a pretty example to set all the vagabonds in the county, you young scoundrel!" It may be remarked that the squire was never unpleasantly particular in his choice of words.

"You will repent of this language some day!" cried Gerald, almost beside himself with rage, and quite unconsciously raising his gun, as the squire, a few minutes before, had raised his stick.

To this threat, or prophecy, whatever its full meaning might be—perhaps Gerald himself hardly knew—the squire made no reply.

"See him off the place, Watson," said he. Then he turned away, and once more entered the spinney.

Without bandying any words with Watson, the young man left the two birds on the ground, and, vaulting over the fence, found himself once more on the safe "hunting ground" of the home farm.

Watson silently picked up the "spoil," and then followed his master. But his soul was filled with dismal, sorrowful forebodings. "When young gents like Mr. Hartley take to poachin'," he said to himself, "no wonder we hes so much trouble with other folks. And if this ain't put down vigorous-like it'll be all hup with t' game. But what a vicious young gent! Threatenin' the squire

like that! I be mortal glad I didn't tackle him! That there gun o' his might ha' brought down game as it was never meant to shoot!" So there was an element of satisfaction in the worthy man's reflections, sad as were their general tone.

Gerald's sport was over for the day. The scene he had just gone through had effectually shattered his nerves. After making one or two palpably bad shots, he gave up in disgust, saying to himself he couldn't hit a haystack. He therefore moodily walked back to the home farmhouse, left some of his bag there, and then slowly turned his steps toward Ivy Cottage.

Like many others who have put themselves in a false position, Gerald began to cast about for some object, animate or inanimate, upon whom he might place the blame really belonging to himself. He had not far to seek. Indeed, some of Squire Ingham's scathing remarks, the very remembrance of which made his ears tingle and his pulses throb with passion, suggested the cause, more or less direct, of the indignity he had suffered. Uncle Jack was at the bottom of it. Here was another instance of the troubles wrought by that low, meddling, unworthy member—alas! that it should be so—of the Hartley family. But for Uncle Jack he might, nay, would have had shooting on the squire's preserves, and then no temptation to indulge in illegitimate sport would ever have arisen.

His uncle's Radical speech at Rushton, filled with the most revolutionary and inflammatory opinions, had incensed the squire—not unnaturally, Gerald admitted. The result was, as he remembered with bitterness of soul, that the squire had broken off all intercourse with the Hartley family. For the sins of one black sheep all had

to suffer. And, of course, Mr. Ingham had concluded that he himself had become imbued with his uncle's low opinions. In a few words he could have put his little mistake quite right with the squire. If the latter had not been so prejudiced against him, his explanation of how he came to be on the wrong side of the fence would have settled the matter in two minutes. But his being Uncle Jack's nephew, and therefore presumably under his influence, had made all explanations impossible, and the result of a moment's excitement or forgetfulness had been made to look like an unpardonable crime. Oh! it was monstrous. Because of Uncle Jack he had suffered awful indignities. The grossest insults had been showered upon him.

The squire did not escape his share of blame, either. However great the provocation, never, never should one gentleman have used such language to another. And, after all, he was of better birth than the Inghams. But he was suffering one of the penalties of being poor.

Hell was in the young man's heart as he gloomily brooded over his wrongs. Instead of going home he turned off toward Rushton.

On his arrival there he went into the Golden Fleece and tried to drown the remembrance of that morning's scenes in draughts, which at times seem to have the effect—though it is but temporary—of the fabled waters of Lethe.

But, even while trying to banish by such means the morning's adventure from his thoughts, he had them brought to his ears, garnished, too, with a few startling details. Ill news travels apace and loses nothing on the road.

Two men, strangers to him, came into the smoke-

room of the little inn. One had evidently just returned from some farm on the squire's property. There he had met and held converse with an under-keeper, who had told him strange news. The squire and Watson, the head keeper, had actually come across a poacher in broad daylight, poaching and bagging partridges. The man said he had done it "in the most owdacious way. That was the rummiest part of the bissniss. The squire orders Watson to collar the birds and game. The young gent refused to give them up. Swears he'll shoot Watson if he lays a finger on 'em. The squire, naturally-like, cusses him awful, and swears he'll put such a scoundrel in jail. The young gent he gets into a rage, and points his gun at the squire and threatens to shoot him. For a moment Watson thinks there's going to be bloody work, and rushes bold-like up to him. But the young varmint lowers his gun, and then, shaking his fist at the squire, tells him he'd better look out, for he'll make him repent of using such language to a gentleman."

Such was the story—interrupted by exclamations and questions on immaterial details, together with reflections on the general depravity of human nature from his hearers—that Gerald had to listen to. It quite sobered him. And, with a steady gait, he walked from the room and went home.

The next day he had ample opportunities for discovering that *this* version of the story was the only one generally accepted as true, both in his own village and in the neighborhood generally.

CHAPTER XVII.

SQUIRE INGHAM'S RUIN.

"Ill news is wing'd with fate, and flies apace."

—DRYDEN.

"The whirligig of time brings in his revenges."

—SHAKESPEARE.

"He that goes a-borrowing goes a-sorrowing."

—FRANKLIN.

"MARIA, that rumor we heard the other day was quite true, it appears," cried Uncle Jack, bustling into the little dining-room at Ivy Cottage just as the family were sitting down to breakfast, one morning soon after the return of the Inghams from the Continent. In his hand he held a copy of the *Rushton and Packlington Advertiser*, the newspaper which, by carrying faithful reports of his speeches to the squire's ears, had made the breach between him and the Hartleys.

"What rumor, John?" asked his sister, languidly. "The air seems full of rumors, generally unpleasant ones, too."

"And those are just the ones which turn out to be true, are they not, uncle?" cried Maude. "But Jack never told us anything!"

"If he had to tell you all the contents of the newspaper on the staff of which he works, why, he would never have done," said her uncle, laughing. "But as the report that Mr. Ingham's estate is to be sold cannot affect any of us personally, we can scarcely call it either pleasant or unpleasant news."

"Oh dear! How sad! And yet it serves him right," murmured Mrs. Hartley. "He should not have treated us so badly, then I should have sympathized more with him."

"Well," said Uncle Jack, sententiously, "if the good old county families won't take care of their estates they must make way for new families that will. In the meantime I shall reserve *my* sympathy for worthier objects than Squire Ingham. If a man will persist in being a fool, why, let the other fools pity him."

"But don't you feel a little for Mr. Eustace Ingham and—and Kate? The old family home will be lost to them," said Grace, looking quite reproachfully at her uncle.

"Yes, Grace," he replied, thoughtfully, after a pause, "Radical, as people call me, I've still got a little room left in my heart for sentiment. And I must confess it would be a terrible wrench for me, were I in their place, to leave the old home of my ancestors. And now, having made this concession to sentiment, let me add, that, as matters stand, this compulsory sale will be a good thing for Eustace."

"A good thing to lose his property!" exclaimed Gerald. "But I suppose you mean," he added, with a half-veiled sneer, "that now he will have to go and work! And if with his hands so much the better."

"My dear Gerald," replied his uncle, equably, ignoring his nephew's offensive tone, "it doesn't much matter what he works with, hands or brain, or both, if only it is honest labor he's engaged in. How often you've heard me say that."

"A precious sight too often," grumbled Gerald to himself. "That's a worn-out sermon on a threadbare text."

"But what I mean is this," went on his uncle: "now he will be free—free to go back to his profession."

"Yes, and they say he was such a clever barrister," cried Maude, impulsively, flushing crimson, however, as she caught her uncle's eye.

"Was he, my dear? All the more reason, then, that he should go back to his profession. And I'm quite sure he will be much happier in it than in trying to tinker up old farm buildings that want pulling to the ground."

"Yes, and slaving away on an estate that belongs really to other people," said Grace, warmly. "I always pity him when I see him riding about the estate; he hasn't the means of doing even half the necessary repairs on the place."

"But I don't exactly see why the estate must be sold. If they don't want to sell it, well, why do they sell it?" remarked Mrs. Hartley, plaintively, looking up at her brother.

"Unfortunately they, if you mean the Inghams, have no choice in the matter," he replied, with an amused air. "For years they have been practically selling the property bit by bit, and now the purchasers want to have their turn. They are going to sell it to some third party. Do you understand now, Maria," he asked, good-naturedly.

"No, not exactly," she replied, shaking her head. "Poor Gerald, my husband, always said, you know, that I had a soul above mere business matters," and she looked as if she had stated some fact which infinitely redounded to her credit.

"Well, the case is in a nutshell. Some London merchant, called Sorby, held a big mortgage on the property. He is dead; his money is to be divided among his

heirs. Squire Ingham cannot pay back the borrowed money; the executors have foreclosed, Hence this compulsory sale. Now is that quite clear?"

"Yes, I think I understand now," replied Mrs. Hartley, in dubious tones.

"In any case," went on Uncle Jack, "the moral of the story is quite, quite simple: Take care you don't inherit the family failings with the old family estate. Remember that property has its responsibilities as well as its privileges. If you've got a promising race-horse, shoot it. If you feel a gambling fit coming on, get your friends to lock you up till it is over. If you are obliged to borrow money, try to pinch and save till you've paid it back. Live within your means, and, above all, remember that idleness is the parent of a numerous and long-lived family of vices."

"My dear uncle, what a sermon!" cried Maude, "and what a pity the old squire isn't here to listen to it!"

"Too late! too late! my love, to do him any good. In fact," he went on, ruefully, as he perceived his nephew had made his escape, "my homily seems altogether out of place. Only ladies present! Well, my tongue will run away with me sometimes. Terribly unruly member, to be sure!"

"I must say that, in spite of his faults, *I* feel sorry for the squire," said Mrs. Hartley. "I know that for one thing he is to be greatly pitied," and she heaved a plaintive sigh.

"Pitied for being a fool, Maria? A willful fool I mean?"

"No, but for having such a willful, selfish son."

"What! Is there another son? A prodigal?" cried Hartley, in amazement.

"No, John, one of the kind is quite enough," replied his

sister-in-law, with a dignified air. "I am referring to Eustace. He could easily repair the broken fortunes of the family, if he were not totally devoid of right feeling."

"Poor Eustace! What a dreadful character you are giving him! And how I have been deceived in that young man!" and Uncle Jack's voice seemed full of tender pathos. "But pray enlighten me as to his misdoings."

"Misdoings, indeed!" and Mrs. Hartley shook her head "To oppose his father's wishes so obstinately. He might make the most splendid match. They say Miss Wright, of Burton Manor, dotes upon him. She is immensely rich, you know, independently of her father. And Eustace Ingham won't even listen to the arrangement that the parents propose. Children are so headstrong and independent in these days!" and another plaintive sigh escaped her breast.

"Perhaps the poor young man has lost his heart elsewhere," suggested Mr. Hartley, looking at Maude, who turned away her head in confusion as she felt the color rise to her cheeks.

"If so, that makes the matter worse," went on Mrs. Hartley, with unruffled demeanor. "Young people should learn to control their feelings till their friends can sanction their proceedings," and she looked significantly at Grace.

"Control your fiddlesticks, Maria," cried Uncle Jack, with more force than elegance. "You think the human heart is like an engine, and that you can control it as you control steam, by simply turning it off or on, just as you please. Wouldn't marry a fortune merely to please his father and preserve the old estate, eh? Well, I'm delighted to hear it. He's a finer fellow than ever I thought him! Sticks to the other girl, does he? Quite right, too."

Fidelity, truth and honesty are worth all the estates in the world."

The worthy man knew perfectly well that Mrs. Hartley's diatribe was meant partly for Grace, who had not sufficiently, she thought, controlled her feelings in the past. And he was also convinced that his sister had not yet learned the secret, which he himself had found a very open one, that Maude and Eustace Ingham were not indifferent to one another.

"Well, well," he murmured to himself, "in spite of hard and prosaic parents, the age of romance is not quite over. But how will all this love-making end, I wonder?"

As for the Inghams, it was a terrible blow to them when they received notice of the intended foreclosure on the part of the executors of the late mortgagee of their property. But nothing could be done to avert it. At such a time, when landed property had depreciated so much in value, it was hopeless trying to raise more money on the place in order to pay off the original mortgage. No, the whole property must go.

Although the squire had long foreseen the possibility of such a catastrophe, its actual realization was none the less appalling to him. He would be the last of the Inghams of Marburn Hall. For centuries the old stock had been planted on the soil; now it was to be rooted up. The Inghams had had their day. Strangers were about to enter into their places. "*Le roi est mort, vive le roi.*" And the new king might be some low Radical cotton-spinner, or iron-master, perchance even a money-lender, Jew or Gentile, either would be equally loathsome as an owner of the estate.

While the squire inwardly groaned over the disaster which had befallen him, and grimly pictured the new

possessors of his property, it never occurred to him to attribute any blame to himself for what had happened. No, he was merely the victim of circumstances; a man to be pitied and condoled with, anything but reproached. His ruin had come from his walking in the ways of his ancestors and keeping up the old family traditions. But certainly a feeling of compunction seized him on thinking of Eustace, who would never have the opportunity of proving himself a true Ingham. Back he must go to the wig and gown in the stuffy law-courts. However, his sorrow on that account only lasted a few minutes, and was succeeded by bitter anger.

After all, Eustace deserved no pity. It was entirely his own fault that his property was going from him. Mary Wright, with all her thousands, and broad acres to boot, was just ready to throw herself into his arms. And the young fool wouldn't open them! To all his suggestions he maundered on about love and honesty. Didn't love the girl and couldn't give her what she had a right to expect on marrying, and therefore held back. Infatuated, obstinate idiot! So long as the girl was satisfied with the bargain, what more was needed? Thus the squire cogitated—no doubt delighted to find a scapegoat for his own sins.

With the young people the predominant cause of sorrow was leaving the old home—the home of their childhood, the nursery of generations of their race. Every stone of the old house was associated with the memory of some past ancestor. Every yard of the old-fashioned gardens and park was linked with reminiscences of the forefathers whose portraits looked down upon their descendants from the walls of the gallery, corridor or dining-room. Even for them another resting-place must

be found, for the rooms in which they had looked down so long on the sports of the young Inghams, or the more serious business of their posterity, would soon echo to the voice of strangers.

"Can nothing be done, Eustace, dear?" sobbed Kate, as the two, sad at heart, slowly paced one of the avenues facing the old hall. "Must we really go?"

"Nothing can be done," replied Eustace, sorrowfully. "But we must try and bear the blow patiently, thinking of the good times we have had here in our old childish days."

"And all this should have been yours, Eustace," she said, mournfully, pointing with her hand to the fair landscape which lay beyond the avenue.

"Shall I resolve, like Clive, to win it all back again?" he asked, smiling down upon her.

"Oh, Eustace, how glorious that would be!" she cried, clasping her hands in the enthusiasm of the moment.

"Ah, indeed, Maude, how glorious it would be! Even to dream of it seems consoling," and his eyes looked very wistful as he gazed at the familiar scene.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN UNEXPECTED KINDNESS.

"To put the power
Of sovereign rule into the good man's hand,
Is giving peace and happiness to millions."

—THOMSON.

IN one sense the Inghams would really suffer but little by the sale of their property. For years the rents, instead of enriching them, had been merely spent in pay-

ing the interests on the mortgages and keeping the estate in something like decent order—that is, in doing merely necessary repairs to the house, cottages and farm buildings. After these expenses were all paid but little remained for the nominal owners of the property. But they lived rent free; that was something.

The Hall would, however, pass away from them with the land, consequently they would have to look out for another home. Birley Court, Mrs. Ingham's ancestral home, was let for a term of years, so that was unavailable. Therefore, some time before the date of the sale the squire began to look around for a house, intending, should he be unsuccessful in finding what he wanted, to go abroad again for a time. But he did not find a suitable house, nor did he, on the other hand, carry out his intention of returning to the Continent. A very considerate offer from the purchaser of the property rendered either step unnecessary.

The sale was held at the Red Lion Hotel at Rushton. That is, if you may call that a sale at which nothing is sold. For the property did not find a purchaser at the sale. No one was prepared to give the reserve price put upon it by the executors of the late mortgagee. A few days after, however, it transpired that the estate had been sold by private contract. But no one knew the name of the purchaser. All that even the *Rushton and Packlington Advertiser* could inform its readers was, that Birks & Son, a well-known firm of London lawyers, had effected the purchase on behalf of one of their clients, who, for the present at least, wished his name to remain a secret.

The squire himself could obtain no information from the lawyer, who personally visited him on business at the Hall.

"I suppose it's some confounded money-lender," grumbled Mr. Ingham, when Mr. Birks informed him that he was not at liberty to disclose his client's name. "Doesn't want it to be known how rich he has grown by lending money at sixty or a hundred per cent. Or I should not wonder if it is some beggarly tradesman or other, who wants to get quite clear of the shop before settling down as a country gentleman. Perhaps he wants a few months' time in which to pick up some manners before he can come and properly ape his betters."

"My dear sir," replied Mr. Birks, blandly, "you are of course at liberty to form any conjectures you please as to the status of our client, but I think you are a little premature in casting reflections on his manners or—"

"Want of manners?" suggested the squire, grimly.

"Exactly so. Just a *little* premature."

"Well, that remains to be seen," said the other, brusquely. "But you can tell me, I suppose, when your client wishes to obtain possession of the Hall itself. He won't turn us out at five minutes' notice?"

"That's just the point I wish to discuss with you. The fact is we have an offer to make to you on behalf of our client. A most liberal offer, too."

"Ah, indeed. Money-lenders always do make most liberal offers," remarked the squire, ironically. "Well, pray let me have his idea of a liberal offer. An offer of what?"

"Our client has no immediate intention of settling down at the Hall, and therefore wishes to find a tenant for it. In the meantime, should you feel disposed to remain where you are, say for a couple of years or so, you are at liberty to do so. And the rent my client asks for the Hall, and all the land adjoining at present unlet, is

what you must consider most reasonable. In fact it is a mere nominal sum."

"Well, I must admit it is a moderate rent," conceded Squire Ingham, on hearing the sum named. "And, upon my word," he went on, in quite cheerful tones, "I'll agree to it. Of course," he added, hastily, "all the covers are included. I must have the shooting."

"Oh, certainly, you have the use of every acre of land on the estate that is unlet."

"Make out the agreement," cried the squire, impulsively, "and, I say, I'll withdraw the remarks I made about your client. I don't care what he is, or how he made his money, he's got some right feeling about him."

The squire's change of front is only another instance of how one's opinion of a man is largely influenced by purely personal considerations. He was acting on the old motto, "Speak of people as you find them."

He had no scruples about occupying as a mere tenant the house which he had always called his own. That was quite in keeping with his character. He was generally considered an extremely proud man. But then, as it has been seen, he was not too proud to keep his tradespeople waiting for their money, or too proud to fool away his son's inheritance in pursuit of his own indulgence. His pride did not prevent his wishing his son to marry for money, nor check his feelings of anger when that same son declared that even his pride alone would effectually debar him from any such course of action. In fact the squire's pride, like that of so many other people, was more effective in checking him from granting favors than receiving them. A favor offered to him seemed a concession to his own dignity; one granted by

himself seemed conceding too much to the dignity of others.

Whether the squire's was a proper pride or no, each one must decide for himself. His family were delighted to hear of the arrangement he had made.

"Two years more in which to look out for a suitable house—how convenient that is!" said Mrs. Ingham.

"Two years more in the old home! How delightful that is!" cried Kate.

"Two years more with many opportunities in them of seeing Maude Hartley—how charming that will be!" thought Eustace. For, even when he lived in town for the sake of his work he could often run over home to see how they were all getting on, and then he could meet her.

None of them felt inclined to resent even for a moment the squire's condescension in accepting a favor from a stranger, and the new owner of their old home. Personal considerations were not without influence upon their judgment.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN ILL WIND BLOWS GOOD.

"It is an ill wind indeed that blows nobody any good."
—OLD ADAGE.

SQUIRE INGHAM'S ruin was not without its influence upon the fortunes of others. Human beings are not isolated units, who live and move and die without touching or being touched by the interests and fates of other mortals, for there is an intimate connection between one

individual and another, and the life of one and the lives of others, albeit they may be in appearance as far apart as the Poles. And to George Turner and Grace Hartley the old squire's monetary losses caused light to spring up in the darkness which enshrouded their future prospects.

Eustace Ingham had returned to London to take up again the broken thread of his life as a barrister. He had no thought of consenting to act as agent to the new owner of the property, and indeed it was not likely that the new man would want him to remain as servant where he had been practically master. But as the unknown owner evidently did not intend personally to superintend his new possessions, it was expected at Marburn that some fresh agent would be appointed in Eustace Ingham's place.

An advertisement which appeared in *The Field*, and other similar journals, effectually put the matter at rest. An agent was required for the Marburn Hall property, and applicants were desired to communicate with Birks & Son, the solicitors, in London, of the new proprietor.

George Turner saw this advertisement, and immediately thought of himself and then of Grace Hartley. For of course it would affect both of them, so he hoped, if he were to be the successful candidate. Because then Mrs. Hartley would surely withdraw her refusal to their engagement.

The young man felt quite elated at the brilliant prospect which lay before them. But only for a few moments. His natural modesty asserted itself and scattered many of his new-born hopes. What chance would he have among the huge number of men who would be sure to apply for the post? Men older and cleverer and

with more experience—and interest, too. Birks & Son might have clients, perhaps relations of their own, whom they could recommend and even intercede for. Moreover, the very fact that he was a native of the place might prove a serious obstacle to his chances of success. The proprietor of the estate might for many reasons prefer a man who was a stranger. No, there was only one circumstance in his favor, and that was that Eustace Ingham would testify to his fitness for the post.

Riding over the farm a few hours after he had seen the advertisement, sunk in such reflections, he came across the elder Hartley, fishing in the stream which had once proved so nearly fatal to him.

“Ah! Good-morning,” shouted George, cheerily. “Any sport this morning?”

Uncle Jack shook his head. “No, they won’t bite a bit,” he replied. “I’ve tried them with everything. Fish are wonderfully like some people one meets. You never know how to take them. But you look rather thoughtful this morning. More than usual, that is,” he continued, noticing a dreamy look in the young man’s face, as if his thoughts were far removed from the present scene.

“Do I?” said George, with a smile, “then my looks speak the truth this time, at least. But read this,” he went on, pulling *The Field* out of his pocket and handing it to Hartley; “you will see the place I have marked.”

“Ah, I see,” remarked the other, after reading the place indicated. “Think it will suit?”

“Oh, it isn’t a question of the place’s suiting me—but shall *I* suit the place? That’s quite a different matter.”

“Well, it won’t do you any harm to try for it,” replied Uncle Jack, cheerfully. “You might find that your

qualifications are just what the present owner of Marburn requires. Of course it is a good thing to be diffident, to prevent too much disappointment in case of failure; but if a man hasn't a little confidence in himself, why, he'll never even think of trying to make a start. Why, bless you, out in the States I tried for heaps of things, and got them, too, that I didn't seem to have the slightest chance for."

"Then you really would advise me to apply to Birks & Son for the situation?"

"Advise you?" replied Uncle Jack heartily, "why, man, I should say you were simply a fool if you didn't. You've nothing to lose and everything to gain." And he looked significantly at George, who colored vividly, knowing exactly what he was thinking about.

"Yes," the young man said, "I've everything to gain. But I'm afraid I could hardly say to these lawyers that getting the post might mean, for me, winning a wife and gaining a home."

"No, I'm afraid you could hardly do that," replied Uncle Jack, with a smile; "they might consider pure sentiment somewhat out of place in a business matter! But, now, hurry off and write your letter, and let me wish you every success. Don't be afraid of mentioning all you know and can do."

Feeling a little reassured by his friend's hopefulness, George rode off, and duly wrote and dispatched his application. Then he waited for a reply to it as calmly as he could. He said nothing about the matter to Grace, fearing that if he were not successful she, too, would be disappointed, while, on the other hand, if he should be successful what a delightful surprise he would be able to give her!

At the end of a week a letter came from Birks & Son requesting his presence in London.

George set off feeling very hopeful. This looked most promising.

"Good-morning, Mr. Turner," said the senior partner of the firm, as he was ushered into his private room. "I'm glad you have given us such a prompt answer to our letter."

George replied calmly and collectedly, though he felt really much excited. His chances of success seemed better than ever.

"Yes, very glad," went on Mr. Birks, "for our client wants the matter settled as speedily as possible. And I may tell you, without any further preliminaries, that I am commissioned by him to offer you the post. That is, if you are satisfied with the stipend, which I may state is five hundred pounds a year."

"Five hundred a year! At the very utmost George had hoped for three.

"Yes, five hundred a year," said Mr. Birks, as if in answer to his look of surprise. "It is a good deal for a comparatively small estate; but, then, for some time there will be a great deal of work required in putting it into thorough order. But I don't suppose you object to the largeness of the stipend."

"Not in the slightest," replied Turner, laughing at the idea. "When," he asked, "can I have an interview with the owner of the property to receive his instructions?"

"Ah, that I can't say," replied the other, blandly. "He will decide that. At present he wishes his name to remain unknown. We shall receive his instructions and forward them to you. In the meantime we have to ask you to set to work at once and make out a detailed list

of what improvements you consider are immediately required on the property. At any time you can communicate with our client through us. I think that is all that remains to be said at present." And here Mr. Birks's manner seemed to indicate that the interview might be concluded.

George went home feeling delighted with the result of his journey, but also extremely bewildered. An unknown employer, almost unlimited discretion as to what he should do, and, to crown all, a larger stipend than he had ever even hoped for. It was evident that the new owner of Marburn was as eccentric as he was wealthy and generous. But these qualities had brought George, as he hoped, within reasonable distance of his life's happiness—a home of his own shared with Grace Hartley.

CHAPTER XX.

A JOYFUL SURPRISE.

"And words of true love passed from tongue to tongue,
As singing birds from one bough to another."

—LONGFELLOW. *The Spanish Student.*

"WISH me joy, Mr. Hartley," cried George, enthusiastically, rushing most unceremoniously into the little sitting-room, where his friend sat enjoying his frugal supper, "wish me joy! I've got the appointment after all," and in the excitement of the moment he vigorously shook Hartley's hand.

"Have you?" cried Uncle Jack, heartily returning his

grasp, "then I do wish you joy with all my heart. Ah, what a thing it is to be young," he went on, somewhat pensively, "and to be able to feel as keenly and express your feelings as freely as you do. Such moments as these can never come to battered out old hacks like me!"

"What!" cried George, "you past feeling? Why, you look just as pleased as I feel."

"Do I?" said Uncle Jack, in dubious tones. "Well, if you don't think that is one the signs of second childhood, I'm glad of it."

"*You* talk of second childhood! Why, you don't look more than fifty! But you haven't asked me anything about my visit and its results."

"No, of course not. I haven't had time yet!" cried the other, laughing. "But now tell me all about it."

George detailed the full history of his experiences in London, to all which his friend listened with great satisfaction.

"And what is your first step to be now?" asked Hartley, when he had heard all.

"Can you ask that question seriously?" replied George, with a significant smile and look. "My first proceeding to-morrow will be to go and have an interview with Mrs. Hartley, and I can only trust that I shall be as successful then as I have been to-day. If I am not I shall care very little about what has just happened."

"Well, in this matter, too, let me wish you every success," said Uncle Jack, heartily; "for every reason I shall be proud to acknowledge and welcome you as a nephew." And once more he wrung the young man's hand. "And I trust," he went on, "that you and Grace will enjoy a long life of happiness together."

So, the next day, as early as was consistent with the

laws of household convenience, George Turner paid a visit to Mrs. Hartley. He was glad to find her alone.

Mrs. Hartley, on his entering her sitting-room, did not express her sense of happiness at seeing him. In the case of many visitors doubtless the expression, "I'm so pleased to see you," was with her a mere passing form, the barest expression of a formal politeness. In this instance she had no hesitation in dispensing with it. Nor did she go through the other formality of offering him her hand.

A cold "Good-morning" came from her lips, while her looks seemed to say: "Now, I wonder what you, of all people, want here?"

She motioned George to a seat. He took it, and for a moment or two there was silence between them. Mrs. Hartley's stony gaze was not calculated to allay the young man's anxiety about the issues of this important interview.

At length George said in his own quiet, self-possessed way: "I have called, Mrs. Hartley, once more to ask you to give your consent to my engagement with Grace—Miss Hartley?"

"I thought that question was settled, once for all, the last time you asked my consent," replied Mrs. Hartley, icily, drawing herself up in a most dignified manner. "You confessed then that you had no home to offer a wife, and I am not aware that even now you are more favorably circumstanced in that respect."

"No, I certainly have not a home yet," began George.

"Then why seek this interview, which cannot end pleasantly for—for either of us?"

"Because I should like to consult Miss Hartley about the choice of one," replied George.

Mrs. Hartley looked at him in astonishment. There was a certain tone of triumph in his manner, as if he had no reason to doubt her consent. She began to thaw a little. Was it possible that some change had taken place in his fortunes? She knew he was considered extremely clever. Perhaps from a worldly point of view it might not prove such a bad match for Grace after all. As to his birth—nothing could alter that! But in these days money would, in the eyes of most people, live down even the defect of lowly birth. Such thoughts as these rendered her tone a little more amiable as she asked: "Then am I to assume, Mr. Turner, that you are now in a position to offer a home, a *suitable* home," and she emphasized the word, "to my daughter?"

"I hope both you and she will think it suitable," replied George. "The fact is, Mrs. Hartley," he went on, "I have been offered the agency of the Marburn property, at a salary of five hundred a year."

The truth was out at last, and Mrs. Hartley heard it with pleased amazement. Naturally amiable, she had not at all liked having to cause Grace such unhappiness as she was well aware her refusal to sanction the engagement had done, and now she was pleased to think that the necessity for it was over.

"Five hundred a year, Mr. Turner!" she cried. "Oh, I think you ought to keep up a very nice home indeed on that sum," and her face grew as radiant as her voice was exultant. The rejected suitor would make a most eligible son-in-law, after all. A nice home indeed! Why, she had to try and make one look nice on con-

siderably less than a third of that sum! How happy dear Grace would be!

"Then you give your consent, dear Mrs. Hartley?" said George, emboldened by her change of manner.

"Oh, most decidedly. You know I always liked you, Mr. Turner—let me say George now," and she smiled kindly on her future son-in-law. "But you understand: a mother must be most careful where the future happiness of her child is concerned. And your prospects *were* most uncertain, you must admit that?"

George was so happy he would have admitted almost anything against himself. At the same time he never could forget that she had seemed to him unnecessarily harsh in forbidding their engagement at all, and he could not honestly have reciprocated Mrs. Hartley's compliment to himself by saying that he had always liked her. She had many little traits of character which jarred upon him. But then, as he had no wish to marry her, these defects of disposition and manner could hardly be said to affect him personally. And to every thoughtful, right-minded man the fact that a girl does not share her mother's failings must rather enhance her own charms in his eyes. Of course it may be said that, having the mother before his eyes as an example, he may rather dread lest the daughter in time may grow like her. But then he must consider that the child is mother of the woman, and that time will rather tend to ripen the charms and graces of a sweet maidenhood than sow the seeds of defects which shall come to maturity in middle or old age. Faith and trust are cardinal articles in the lover's creed.

George Turner was convinced that Grace would be always charming.

In reply to Mrs. Hartley's insinuation he admitted the soft impeachment, and then, not wishing to enter into a discussion about the past, he asked whether he could see Grace.

For he was eager to enter the paradise which had so suddenly been opened to him.

"Grace is not in, I am sorry to say," replied Mrs. Hartley; "she has gone across the fields to Rushton. But will you wait till she returns? I expect her back in half an hour at the very latest."

George preferred not to wait. The truth was, he intended to go and meet her. Accordingly, having said all that an accepted suitor should say under the circumstances to his future mother-in-law, he took his leave.

Meantime Grace was returning home from Rushton. She had been to see about some work, and was feeling a little troubled about the small, uncertain payments she received for a large amount of sewing. Was it to be always thus? Was her youth to pass in this way? Was she to have none of the happiness which seemed to come so abundantly into the lives of other girls? High motives had made her take up the lowly work, but all the same it was none the less irksome to her. She had been to see a rich shopkeeper's wife, who, having seen her advertisement, had written to ask, nay, rather to demand, a personal interview before intrusting some dresses to her to be made. Grace obtained the work, but on lower terms than she liked, and was feeling pained not a little by the way in which the other had, as she would have expressed it, "beaten her down."

Being tired, as she drew near the bridge so well remembered by Uncle Jack, that had now, of course, been

repaired, she sat down to rest for a few moments on the trunk of a huge oak which, lately felled, lay prostrate but a few yards from the narrow path. It was a warm spring day, and the hum of insects, the murmur of the purling brook, the song of the lark overhead, the tender chant of the blackbird, coming from some neighboring thicket, and the distant lowing of the cows—all these blended together into one harmonious melody, which in a few short moments lulled the weary girl's senses to sleep.

But her light slumber was soon disturbed, rudely and outrageously, by the pressure of a strong arm around her slender waist. Hardly had she awoke to the realization of this astounding fact, and before her maidenly instincts, thus rudely shocked, could resent it, she felt on her cheek the pressure of a pair of lips.

Confused, indignant, a vivid, burning blush of maidenly shame overmantling her cheeks, she tried to rise, but could not, and then, swiftly turning, she found herself in the arms of George Turner.

"Forgive me, dearest," he whispered, gently, "but the temptation was too great."

"George, how dare you?" she began, indignantly. Then, as the lover's overcame the maiden's feelings, she went on more gently: "Oh, how could you make me break the promise I made mother?" And then the hot tears began to stream down her cheeks.

"But, Grace, love, listen to me. I did it with your mother's full consent. She gave me permission to—to—"

"No, George, surely not to do *all* you have done," and she lifted her eyes shyly to his, while the color flew once

more to her face as she remembered what the *all* implied.

"Yes, dearest, all, I think. For she has consented to our engagement."

The girl felt very happy, as, once more, she felt herself clasped in her lover's arms, while his lips pressed her cheeks and brow, and, there and then, her lips.

That seemed to her the solemn seal *before Heaven of their betrothal.*

CHAPTER XXI.

AN UNFORTUNATE SHOT.

"How oft the sight means to do ill deeds,
Makes ill deeds done!"

—SHAKESPEARE.

THE sluggishness of the little river Lent rendered it admirably adapted for an extensive growth of choice weeds, the haunts of countless huge and voracious pike. At certain seasons, too, wild duck found these said weeds a very happy feeding ground.

Gerald Hartley, who cared much more for sport than for work, spent many hours a day on the banks of the Lent, or even on its surface, in a flat-bottom boat, or punt. In the winter months, especially, pike fishing or wild-duck shooting made him a frequent visitor to the slow-running stream, from which he seldom returned empty-handed. Occasionally, too, when the moon was up, he got good sport among the wild duck at night-time.

Toward the middle of November, just at the period of full moon, he made all the arrangements for such a moonlight expedition. But alas for his hopes! The night set in stormy; the moon was shut in by layers of dense clouds which effectually quenched its silvery beams. After waiting till eleven o'clock, Gerald went up to his room in disgust; the night seemed blacker than ever.

But he had scarcely begun to undress when the clouds dispersed and the moon shone forth in all her splendor. Hastily putting on his coat again, he went downstairs, seized his gun, called his dog, and, noiselessly leaving the house, set off in high spirits toward the Lent.

He did not, however, go unperceived. For Maude heard him leave his room and descend the stairs. She knew and dreaded the reason of this alteration in his plans; for she had a perfect horror of these night excursions, especially after his fracas with Mr. Ingham. At any time he might meet the latter's keepers on his way to the Lent, for the nearest way ran through the squire's fields. He would be sure to take that way. She imagined the most appalling consequences would follow such a meeting between Gerald and the keepers. But her remonstrances had always been in vain. He laughed at her fears, or, perchance, brusquely told her to mind her own business.

Noiselessly leaving the room, she went to the head of the stairs. Her fears were well grounded. By the light of the hall lamp, which he had lighted, she saw him, fully equipped for a shooting expedition, leave the dining-room. Having extinguished the lamp, he next opened the front door and went out. His sister heard a few hasty steps on the graveled walk, and he was gone.

Sorrowfully, her mind full of dim, anxious forebod-

ings, she went back to her room. But not to sleep. That was out of the question, till she knew that he had returned safe and sound. Several times before she had waited up in this way, watching for his return. And often, during the silent night watches, she had sighed to herself: "Oh, how I wish Gerald were half as eager in finding something to work at as he is in getting a little sport!"

She had, however, one consolation. Neither Grace, who was working so bravely for them all, or her mother, who was in such delicate health, shared her knowledge of these midnight excursions, for their rooms were at the other side of the house. As for Jack, whose bedroom was next to Gerald's, when he was up he was so absorbed in his work, and when he was in bed he was so sound asleep, after his hard toil, that he never heard anything that passed.

And now, full of glee at the prospect of some good sport among the ducks, Gerald pursued his way toward the Lent, taking as usual the shortest cut, just as Maude feared. However, he arrived at his destination without let or hindrance. But so far as getting any wild ducks was concerned, he had his journey all for nothing. There were ducks about, it was true. He could hear them quacking; yet always, it seemed to him, in the far distance. Some indeed he saw, but generally they were far out of his reach. Two or three he brought down after a long time of weary waiting, but his dog, clever as he was, proved unable to find them. Then the night grew dark again, thick clouds gradually spread over the moon, apparently for the night. Finally, after two hours' paddling about in the wet grass, or among the still wetter reeds, in despair he determined to go home.

“Just like my usual luck,” he grumbled. “All this way for nothing. And just listen to that! Heaps of birds about. But it’s no use waiting any longer in this darkness; you might as well try and shoot in a well.”

So in a rage, tired, wet and disappointed, he set off home again.

As he crossed the fields he had to pass by a small plantation of larches, which, as he well knew, was the favorite roosting-place of some of the squire’s pheasants. Many a time, when on similar excursions, he had heard them crying to one another from the boughs of the larches, nay, once or twice, in the clear moonlight, he had seen them apparently packed quite tight on the lower branches of the trees they had chosen for their night’s rest.

How often had he longed for just one shot! One would do plenty of execution, so thick together they seemed to be perching. But, hitherto, prudence had always kept him back. Unseen by him, some keeper might be quite close by. To be caught would be too disgraceful. Since his “row,” as he termed it, with Squire Ingham, however, having a shot at these particular pheasants had seemed one of the stolen pleasures which had grown immeasurably sweeter. On this evening, fruitless so far in spoil, as he passed close by the fence which surrounded the plantation, the desire of indulging in the forbidden pleasure came upon him with stronger force than ever. And, as if to tantalize him, as he stood leaning over the fence, the moon came out again in all her splendor, plainly revealing, in sharp outline, the outer edge and the lower branches of the larch trees.

Surely, that was a cock-pheasant in the middle of that

branch. Nothing but its plumage could sparkle thus in the moonlight. Yes, it was, and there was another, and another!

Gerald looked round. Behind him the coast was clear. Almost involuntarily his gun went up to his shoulder. He pressed the trigger. A report appallingly loud in the stillness of the night woke the echoes all around. The startled cries of the birds were to be heard in all directions as they darted in amazement from their roosting-places. And, above all—yes, there was no doubt of it—the shriek of some human being as if in pain.

Gerald hastily mounted the fence and peered over the narrow strip of field which stretched across to the plantation.

Yes, there was a man; and he was running in his direction. He had fired too low, and wounded some keeper who was lying concealed just outside the plantation. The other man was his companion, in pursuit of the poacher—himself!

Horror-struck at these terrible, unforeseen consequences of his shot, Gerald took to instant flight—a hasty glance backward, as he did so, revealing the fact that he was followed by the keeper.

This sight doubled his speed. To be arrested as a poacher, after having wounded—wounded? nay, perhaps killed—a keeper, seemed a calamity overwhelming in its consequences.

But misfortunes seemed to accumulate. The moon once more became overcast with clouds. The young man lost the path, once or twice ran into a hedge, tearing his clothes and receiving numerous wounds on the face and hands from the thorns. Finally, he stumbled and fell heavily to the ground. As he did so his gun fell from

his nerveless grasp. In vain did he try to recover it, all his groping was futile. And the moon refused to show one faint gleam of light.

Muttering a cry of mingled despair and rage, he at length left off attempting to try and recover his gun. He must escape at all cost. Rising from the ground once more, he took to his heels, almost fancying he could hear the steps of his pursuers quite close to him.

For a moment the moon showed a ray of light, and he looked back. No, the keeper was standing just where he had lost his gun!

Horrible sight! For he might now stumble across the fatal weapon — fatal in another sense, for on it was legibly engraved his own name.

But to linger was dangerous; he dare not run the risk of being recognized by the keeper. His gun might be undiscovered among the long grass, and in the morning, before others were stirring, he would come and search for it. So, without further delay, once more he began to hurry toward home with all possible speed.

CHAPTER XXII.

MAUDE'S GREAT ALARM.

“Alas, the world is full of peril!
The path that runs through the fairest meads,
On the sunniest side of the valley, leads
Into a region bleak and sterile!
Alike in the high-born and the lowly,
The will is feeble and passion strong.”

—LONGFELLOW. *The Golden Legend.*

“OH! thank Heaven, Gerald, dear, you’ve got back safely,” cried Maude, rushing to the door when she heard the sound of his latch-key in it. “I heard you go out, and I couldn’t rest. I imagined all sorts of dreadful things were happening to you. Why, how wet you are!” she cried, as she laid her hand on his arm. “Do make haste and take off your things,” and she led him into the dining-room.

“Gerald, what has happened?” she almost shrieked, in her horror, as the light of the lamp fell on him. “You are covered with blood, and your coat is all rags, and—and—” she could say no more, but sank trembling on the sofa.

Her brother indeed looked a pitiable object. The blood from his face and hands had stained his clothes here and there, and they were full of rents and covered with mud, some of which was partly dried and still standing out in wet, filthy blotches. From his boots drops of water kept oozing out upon the carpet. And, except where the bloodstains and scars appeared, his face was deadly

pale. His hat was gone, and his dark hair, in tangled masses, came over his forehead.

Maude looked at him in horror. "Where is your gun?" she cried, at length, as a sudden thought flashed across her mind.

"Give me some brandy," said Gerald, hoarsely, "I can't speak plainly yet. Ah, that's better. I was almost fainting."

Maude waited in anxious excitement for a few moments, while her brother sat with downcast head moodily gazing into the grate.

"I've made a mess of it this time, Maude," he said, at last, without raising his eyes toward her.

"Oh, what—what has happened, Gerald?" she whispered, faintly, for she was filled with a thousand vague alarms, and dreaded the very worst.

"I've shot somebody—"

"Shot somebody," groaned Maude, clasping her hands in despair, while all the color left her cheeks and her heart almost ceased to beat, in her great terror—"not—not—oh, surely not on purpose! Don't say that," and a look of pathetic entreaty came into her lovely eyes as she fixed them on him, as if she would read the truth in his terrified face. Breathlessly she waited for his answer.

"No, Maudie, not quite so bad as that. I didn't mean to do it. It was quite an accident," he said.

"Oh, thank Heaven for that!" cried Maude, fervently.

"Yes, it was the purest accident," said Gerald, and then he briefly described to her the events of the past few hours.

"Oh, Gerald," exclaimed Maude, when he had finished

his painful story, "if—if only you had come straight home without lingering near the forbidden ground!"

"Ah, Maude, if—that's where it is! There is always an 'if'!"

"Well, I trust we shall hear in the morning that the poor man you wounded has merely received the slightest injury," said Maude, endeavoring to look at the brightest side. "And now I think we had better go to bed. Some of the others might awake and hear our voices. For every reason it will be better to keep this to ourselves."

"Ay, as long as we can," replied Gerald, significantly, fervently hoping that his secret might not become public property.

Then they went upstairs, but not to sleep; dread forebodings of what they might hear in the morning effectually prevented their gaining the brief respite from anxiety which the oblivion of sleep affords.

The shadow of the future hung dark over each moment of the present.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

"At the devil's boot are all things sold,
Each ounce of dress costs its ounce of gold;
For a cap and ball our lives we pay,
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking—"
—J. G. WHITTIER. *The Vision of Sir Launfal.*

GERALD had not reached Ivy Cottage, early morning as it was, without having been observed and recognized by at least two unseen witnesses.

It happened that one of Mr. Crossland's hunters had been taken ill during the preceding afternoon. As it was a very valuable mare its owner had immediately sent for the veterinary surgeon, who pronounced that the animal was suffering from a severe chill. After prescribing certain remedies the man left, promising to return the next day.

But Crossland's anxiety for the safety of the mare kept him awake till past midnight. Then he got up and went down to the stables to ascertain from his head groom how Belinda was getting on.

Much relieved to find she was progressing favorably, he lit a cigar, and, accompanied by his groom, strolled across the stable-yard toward a gate which opened into a field. For some time they both stood looking over the landscape, now flooded with a stream of silvery light.

Suddenly, just as the clock in the turret-tower of the old courtyard was striking three, the groom, pointing with his finger straight before him, cried out: "Why, look there, sir! Blest if I don't think that be Mr. Gerald Hartley!"

"Is it?" replied his master, quietly, peering in the direction indicated. "Ah, it does look like Mr. Hartley. Been taking a moonlight stroll, I shouldn't wonder."

Wearied by the excitement of having been chased and the fatigue of his run, Gerald was now walking leisurely along, betraying no signs of having passed through anything extraordinary. In a few moments he disappeared in the direction of his home.

"Grimes, I think you had better go back to the stable," remarked his master, after a brief interval of silence. "I shall be off to bed again. But mind, if any change for

the worse takes place you must let me know at once."

"All right, sir," replied Grimes. "You won't get much sleep before daylight."

"No; but I don't mind that so long as the mare keeps better."

Crossland was just about to leave the stable-yard when his eye caught sight of another figure hastily proceeding in the direction previously taken by Gerald.

"Ah, who's that, I wonder?" he said to himself. "Why, I declare the place is quite lively to-night. Somebody's been among the birds. I must look into this."

Just then the moon became overcast, and he was unable to distinguish even the form of the unknown wanderer.

Muttering a few angry words at the disappearance of the light, Crossland turned away toward the house. Then, rushing indoors, he seized a revolver from his gunroom, and, by a circuitous path, managed to intercept his man just as he was crossing the stile leading from the field into the high road.

"Hullo! what are you up to?" shouted he, roughly seizing the man by the arm.

"What's that to you?" the man muttered, shaking himself loose, and, raising his stick, he held it as if about to strike. "Can't a peaceable hindividoal take a hevening stroll without being molested? What's your little game?"

"Oh, it's you, Sikes, is it?" replied Crossland, quietly, pointing his pistol quite close to the other's head.

"Law, squire, be that yew?" replied Sikes, in a tone of pretended surprise.

"Why, of course it is, you fool. You knew that all

along. And now what's your game? Here, come with me," and he led him into the house.

"Now, let's see what you've got on," he went on, sternly, when they were indoors and the man stood in full light of the hall lamp. "Any of my pheasants?"

Slowly and sadly Mr. Sikes produced a couple of rabbits and a brace of pheasants from his capacious pockets.

"They baint yourn, raly, squire," protested he, eagerly.

"I shall take the liberty of keeping them at any rate," replied Crossland, coolly. "And now where's your gun?" he added. "Bring it out."

"Gun, squire!" feebly protested Mr. Sikes; "why, you see I ain't got no gun," and he shook his hands to show that he was holding nothing.

"Now then make haste," Crossland went on, sternly, growing impatient.

"Don't be too hard on a hindividooal," whimpered Sikes, as from the lining of his coat he produced the various parts of his gun.

"No, I'll leave that to the magistrates," replied Crossland. "And now, Mr. Sikes, let me show you off the premises."

"Well, I ain't the only one what's been having a little sport to-night," protested the poacher, in injured tones. "Another cove's been out, too, but I s'pose cos he's a gennleman there bain't no law for 'e."

"A gentleman out poaching! Rubbish!" said Crossland, contemptuously, as he eagerly scanned the man's features.

"Ah, a gennleman!" persisted Sikes, stoutly, "an' if you'd been at that ther' gate a few minutes afore you'd

'a ketched 'im, too; a friend of yourn, Mr. Gerald Hartley."

"There, that will do, Sikes. Lies won't improve your case. Perhaps you will say next that you met Squire Ingham or the vicar netting rabbits in my warren. Now, be off till to-morrow."

Mr. Sikes withdrew, loudly protesting against his hard fate compared with that of others, and exclaiming as a parting shot: "If you don't believe a 'onest man's words just you take a herly walk, squire, toward Marden Spinney, and, likely as not, you'll come across that 'ere gennleman's gun. I owes him a grudge, I does."

He put his hand to his shoulder, and seemed to hold it as he went away, and Crossland wondered for a moment if he had been hurt in any way.

Crossland was up early the next morning, in spite of having retired at such an unusual hour. Anxiety for his hunter had made him restless, and the little sleep he got was of a very fitful character. Then his encounter with Sikes kept recurring to his mind even in his dreams. Altogether he was glad when the first rays of daylight penetrated to his room.

His first visit was paid to the stables. Happily, Belinda had passed a better night than her master.

"Wonnerful lot better, sir, this morning," said the groom. "Ain't the same hoss she was last night. I raly think she'll pull through fust rate."

"She certainly is better," said Crossland, after he had examined her. "The medicine and sleep together have made a wonderful improvement in her." And, feeling intensely relieved, he prepared to leave the stable for the breakfast-room.

"Dreadful thing happened last night, or rather this

morning, sir. But perhaps you've heard it already?" remarked the groom.

"No, I've heard nothing, Grimes. What is this dreadful thing?" And Crossland looked inquiringly at him.

"Squire Ingham's been shot last night in Marden Spinney," answered the man, laconically.

"Squire Ingham shot! No, really, is that the truth?" cried Crossland, in amazement, startled for the moment out of his usual phlegmatic manner.

"Yes, sir, quite true, sir," affirmed Grimes, confidently. "One of the underkeepers, young Bird, was round here on his way to Rushton, not half an hour ago. Squire very bad indeed."

"How very shocking!" said Crossland. "Severely wounded, too? How did it happen? Accident? Poachers? Or what?"

"Well, sir, young Bird did say as how they think it be poachers; 'an there be a howdacious lot o' them varmint roun' about her, surelie." And the virtuous Grimes's voice took a tone of holy indignation. "By-the-by, sir," he added, after a few moments apparently spent in deep reflection, "rayther curious that Mr. Gerald Hartley should be a-comin' about that time this mornin' straight from Marden Spinney; leastways from that direction. I wonder whether he saw anything out o' the common."

Crossland cast a keen, searching look at Grimes as he uttered these words. Was the man insinuating anything against Gerald Hartley, or was his remark a purely simple and innocent one, with all its meaning quite on the surface?

But nothing was to be gathered from the man's face. It was totally guiltless of any unusual expression. In fact it might have been carved in wood, except for the

twinkle in his eyes. But then they always seemed to twinkle.

“Well, if Mr. Hartley saw anything,” said Crossland, “I daresay he will say something. Don’t forget,” he added, as he left the stable, “to send a boy over to the Hall to ask, with my compliments, how Mr. Ingham is. Let him go before noon.”

Grimes’s apparently innocent remark had opened before Crossland a wide field for conjecture. Had Gerald Hartley been in Marden Spinney that morning? If so, what was he doing there? Or, perhaps, he was only passing it on his way to the Lent after some wild-duck shooting? But then he had had no gun with him. In the bright moonlight that was easy to be seen. And then Sikes’s remarks that Gerald Hartley had been poaching as well as himself, and that his gun might be “come across” if he took a “herly walk toward Marden Spinney,” recurred to his mind.

He did not spend much time over his breakfast that morning. Every minute was precious just then. The air was full of mysteries. Squire Ingham shot by some one unknown; Gerald Hartley out poaching by night near that same Marden Spinney. His returning home about three o’clock in the morning in such a state of mind as to make him leave his gun behind him. What did it all mean?

Crossland, as well as nearly every one in the village, had heard the story of Gerald’s having threatened to shoot the squire a month or two before.

Drawing on his boots, and without giving himself time to go upstairs to see his mother, who breakfasted in her own room, and who would probably fret all the morning at this neglect on his part, Crossland sallied forth in the

direction of Marden Spinney. He was a man who loved power; the discovery, perchance it might even be the possession, of Gerald's gun would give him a great deal of power *over Gerald*. And that was just what he wanted, for reasons which seemed to him to be all important.

He set off along the foot-path leading to Marden Spinney, carefully scanning every yard of ground on each side. In the first half of the way the path led through his own land, and then across some pasture fields belonging to Squire Ingham. On his own land all his efforts were fruitless, no gun was to be found. But in the very first field, on the other side of the boundary line, his perseverance was rewarded. Lying in some long grass, almost hidden from view, lay the object of his search. There was no doubt the gun belonged to Gerald Hartley, for his name was engraved on a silver plate let into the stock. On examining it, Crossland found that one barrel was still loaded, while in the other an empty cartridge-case seemed to point to the fact that the gun had been fired off the previous night. A man would hardly leave home with his gun in such a condition. Moreover, some very pressing reason for hurrying off immediately after firing one shot would further tend to explain why the empty cartridge had not been extracted.

What was the reason for this hurried flight?

Crossland knew that Gerald was incapable of carrying out his threat against the squire, even if he had uttered it, as people said. He, himself, professed to be Gerald's friend, and yet took a curious pleasure in finding out that the evidence looked very bad against him.

One circumstance caused Crossland surprise, and he

shook his head as if in mournful pity at such a depth of folly. It was that Gerald should have allowed one moment of daylight to pass unutilized in searching for his gun. That it should be found by any one, on land to which he had no lawful access, was in itself something that might give rise to serious suspicions and demand a little explanation on the part of its owner.

Gerald, however, was neither so foolish nor so reckless as his apparent indifference to the discovery of his gun might seem to imply. The explanation of his neglect to search for it was very simple. Thoroughly wearied out, both mentally and physically, by the scenes he had passed through before reaching home, he had overslept himself in the morning, and had even failed to hear the loud knock which the little maid as usual had given at his door. Unfortunately, too, for him, his non-appearance at the breakfast-table passed by almost unnoticed. His irregularity was much too frequent to call forth any comment on the part of the others. So his slumbers were undisturbed. Then again Maude was too poorly to come down to breakfast. Her indisposition still further tended to withdraw attention from himself.

It was therefore fully ten o'clock before Gerald came downstairs. Having hastily partaken of a little breakfast he hurried off to recover, if possible, his gun. On his way to Marden Spinney loud and deep were the reproaches he hurled at himself for being so late in the field.

"Why, a score of people may have passed along this way already," muttered he, as he approached Marden Spinney without seeing any traces of his gun. Finally, he stood at the very place where he had fired the fatal shot. How he cursed his folly for having been led away by the impulse of the moment to do such a mad thing!

He was, indeed, bitterly repenting of at least one action in his past life, one of his most recent ones, too. But from a moral standpoint his repentance might be considered extremely defective. It was rather a dread of the consequences of his conduct than any acute feeling of sorrow for the ill-doing itself. His act was to be intensely deplored because it might be brought to light. The bringing to light of it might involve him in serious disgrace. Nay, even some extreme penalties might follow.

Slowly and sadly he retraced his steps, still narrowly searching in every slight hollow and closely scanning each foot of ground where the long grass or luxuriance of tall weeds seemed to offer a hiding-place for his gun. But of course his search was still fruitless.

Once more he stood on Crossland's land; a few minutes later face to face with its owner.

On finding Gerald's gun, Crossland, after extracting the full cartridge, had taken it to pieces, carefully stowing away the different parts in the capacious pockets of his shooting coat. Thus, without attracting any notice, he was able to take it safely home. After carefully locking it up, he next proceeded to place himself on the lookout for Gerald, feeling convinced that, sooner or later, that young man would make his appearance, intent on the search for what was now in his own possession.

"Ah, it's the early bird again, Gerald," chuckled Crossland to himself, when at length he saw Gerald tardily appear in the very field where he had seen him already that morning, now many hours ago.

Not allowing him to get out of sight, Crossland slowly

followed him, sauntering, as it were, along the path, bent on anything but business.

"Ah! Hartley," he exclaimed, when at length he came up to him, "how are you? Fine, fresh day, isn't it?"

"Oh, splendid day, splendid," replied Gerald, mechanically, inwardly fuming at this untoward meeting, which interrupted the important task he was engaged in.

For fully a quarter of an hour Crossland kept his victim on tenter hooks, discoursing all the while on the most trivial subjects. So, at least, they appeared to Gerald.

"You seem rather in a hurry to get off, Hartley," said Crossland, at last, pretending to be suddenly aware of the other's ill-concealed impatience to escape.

"Well, I am rather in a hurry," muttered Gerald, hardly venturing to look his friend in the face. "I have a little business on hand."

"Business and Gerald Hartley! What an unusual combination!" exclaimed Crossland, with a laugh. "Has Lord Granton turned out trumps at last? But business connected with his good endeavors would hardly bring you here this morning."

"Oh, hang Lord Granton," cried Gerald, ill-humoredly. "I shan't trouble him again in a hurry, you bet! No, it's quite different business; but there, that can wait."

"I think I know what your business is," replied Crossland, quietly, narrowly scanning the other's face as he spoke.

"You know what—what—my—business is?" stammered Gerald, turning deathly pale.

"Well, I think so. But I don't think you need worry any more about it this morning."

way he was able to see the slightest change in Gerald's countenance, while the expression of his own face could not be clearly seen by him. It was not, by any means, the first time that Crossland had played this maneuver with his visitors, and not infrequently to his own decided advantage.

"Have a glass of beer, Gerald? You look a bit fagged," he said, with assumed kindness.

"No, thanks. I'm all right," replied Gerald, huskily. He was in little humor for any refreshment.

"No? Well, then, I won't just now. But I don't think a pipe would be a bad thing." And, taking one from the rack, he filled and lighted it.

All the time Gerald sat motionless, with his eyes fixed on the ground.

"Let me see," said Crossland, at length, "what were we talking about? Oh, of course, your gun," he added, in an airy tone. "Did I say how it came into my hands?"

"No, you did not."

"Well, it was found just outside my land, in that first grass field of the squire's, you know."

"Yes? When was that?"

"Oh, about an hour ago. How did you manage to lose it?" And he looked searchingly at Gerald.

"Oh, I was out duck-shooting last night, and coming—home—had a fall. In the dark I couldn't—come across the confounded thing again," faltered Gerald, hardly venturing to raise his eyes.

Crossland refrained from asking how it was that his friend had gone out shooting without taking a box of lights with him. But, instead of asking that, he made an inquiry of quite a different character.

"By-the-by, Gerald," he said, "did you hear that Squire Ingham was shot last night, or rather early this morning?"

"Squire Ingham shot!" cried Gerald, springing up from his chair while the drops of perspiration stood out like beads on his forehead. "Squire Ingham shot!" he repeated, in husky tones. Then, with a look of intense despair, he sank back in his chair, covering his face with his hands.

"Yes, shot. Somewhere near Marden Spinney, they say."

For a few minutes the most perfect silence reigned in the room. Gerald still sat with his face buried in his hands. Crossland was inwardly blessing his good fortune in having encountered Sikes and his foresight in securing the tell-tale gun. For he saw, more or less clearly, certain advantages which he might reap from Gerald's misfortunes. Crossland was one of those men who rarely trouble themselves to any great extent about events which do not, or may not, eventually concern themselves.

"There is something else I should tell you, Gerald," he said, at length, in tones apparently full of the deepest sympathy and tenderest interest.

"Let me hear all you have to say," replied Gerald, sullenly. "Your budget seems pretty full this morning. But I haven't heard anything pleasant from it so far."

"My dear Gerald," said Crossland, in deprecating tones, "really you speak as if I were responsible for the news I have to tell you this morning. But, of course, if you would rather not hear anything further I will—"

"No, no, let me have the lot," cried Gerald, bruskiy, interrupting him; "I shall know the worst then."

"Well, I really think you ought to know this item," went on Crossland, significantly. "You were seen leaving Marden Spinney this morning—and with your gun."

"Seen! By whom?" asked Gerald, faintly.

"Well, by two people at least. But I think I can answer for the discretion of one."

Gerald did not resent the insinuation contained in what the other was saying, and this reticence on his part Crossland considered most damning. It was indeed a tacit admission, he considered, that he was concerned in the wounding of Squire Ingham.

"Things look rather black against me," murmured Gerald, at last, "and I don't mind confessing that, although they are not quite so bad as they look, there is some—"

"My dear Gerald," interrupted Crossland, hastily, "I really must beg of you not to make any confession to me. Secrets are no secrets when confided to another, however trustworthy he may appear. At present I know nothing for certain, and therefore you need not fear on my account."

"Well, perhaps you are right," said Gerald, after a pause. "You might find yourself placed in rather an awkward fix some time or other. And I don't want to drag any one else into my misfortunes."

"Another admission," thought Crossland. Aloud he said, tentatively: "Of course, if I can really help you?" He had no wish to appear unfriendly.

"No; I don't think you or any one else can help me," said Gerald, after a slight pause. "When a man's made a fool of himself outside help won't do away with the

consequences of his folly. And now let me go," he added, rising from his seat. "Good-by," and he held out his hand; "don't think quite the worst of me." Then, without giving Crossland any time for replying, he hurriedly left the room.

A smile of pleasure lighted up Crossland's features when the door closed on his friend. So far from being touched by the agony which he plainly saw the other was suffering, or even shocked at the barely veiled confession of a crime, he began to weigh in his mind the possible advantages to himself which might result from the events of the past few hours.

Gerald's manner, his silence, as well as his words, all pointed to the conclusion that he had shot Squire Ingham. And Crossland felt convinced that his parting words plainly intimated that, to escape the consequences of his crime, he was about to flee from the neighborhood. His very flight, coupled with the fact of his having been seen coming from Marden Spinney that morning, would, in the minds of many people, amount to a tacit admission of his guilt.

If the squire died, whether Gerald was actually discovered and proved guilty or not, an insurmountable barrier was thus raised forever between Eustace Ingham and Maude Hartley. One obstacle to Crossland's successful suit of Maude was thus removed. Should, however, the girl still prove cold and unmoved by his wooing, the knowledge he had obtained of Gerald's doings might be so utilized as to bring her to her senses.

And, if Gerald was in such dire disgrace, the other members of the Hartley family might not unreasonably be expected to come in for his share of the elder Hartley's money.

In the meantime Gerald hastened home, with one thought standing out prominently in his mind: He must make his escape from Marburn at once. To remain, seemed to be courting the most dreadful consequences, the mere thought of which made him shudder with shame and terror.

He had been poaching on the squire's property. While thus unlawfully engaged he had, accidentally, it was true, wounded the squire himself. He had been seen and recognized near the very spot where the deed was done. His gun had been discovered and traced to himself. And worst, and most damning fact of all, he had been heard to threaten the squire for having used strong language to himself when detected in an earlier act of poaching. True, he was innocent of all intention of wounding Ingham. Yes, but for proof of that there was nothing but his bare word.

If Ingham recovered he would naturally, after what had occurred at their last meeting, be inclined to place the worst construction on his actions.

No, there seemed nothing for him that would do any good but immediate flight. Better to escape, even if his flight were considered further proof of his guilt, than to remain and suffer because unable to prove his innocence.

CHAPTER XXV.

CROSSLAND'S MACHINATIONS.

“ But all was false and hollow, though his tongue
Dropt manna; and could make the worse appear
The better reason.” —MILTON.

AFTER his interview with Crossland, Gerald Hartley went home, collected his very slender stock of jewelry

and most portable valuables, and then, without one word of farewell to any one in the house, set off for Rushton.

His last look at Marburn, as he glanced back from the top of a small hill over which the road led, had not any regret in it. He was leaving no pleasant associations behind him, carrying no pleasant memories with him. Just the contrary, in fact. His life at Marburn had been a failure in every way. Disappointment, coldness, reproaches had met him on every side. So he thought, with a heart full of bitterness. And then, finally, there was his last stroke of ill fortune. But although Gerald admitted to himself that his past life had been such a distinct failure, he would not admit that the cause of that failure was to be found in himself. Like many people who willfully go wrong, and then have to suffer for their actions, he was ready to blame everything and everybody but himself. His late father's want of business capacity, Lord Granton's neglect and want of family affection, Squire Ingham's insolence, his uncle's burdensome officiousness and disagreeableness generally, these, and a variety of other causes, all existent in other people, had helped to mar his life. He was an unfortunate victim, with a bitter grievance against society in general and many individuals at Marburn in particular.

It may be thought that Gerald's act in fleeing from Marburn in order to avoid the possible danger of being brought to justice for wounding, perhaps it might be causing the death of, the squire proves him to have been utterly devoid of courage. But it is not necessarily so. For a man may be physically brave and yet morally a coward. He may be able to bear cheerfully bodily pain, or run the risk of losing his life, and yet shrink utterly from going contrary to public opinion. He may prefer

the blows of an enemy to the taunts of a friend. He may be physically brave enough to risk his life in a bad cause, and yet morally weak enough to shrink from the slightest suffering in one that is just but unpopular. Gerald had often risked his life on his sporting expeditions, but morally, as we have seen, he was a coward.

And again, even physical courage may be weakened by persistent self-indulgence. A man constitutionally brave but inherently selfish, and not averse to fighting in his own defense, may seriously ask himself whether danger will not be too great if he fights in defense of others. To get into the way of thinking only of one's self is seriously to diminish the field of action in which even animal courage may display itself. And therefore it is possible that, even as regards Gerald's natural physical bravery, there had been a gradual but not the less sure deterioration.

On reaching Rushton Gerald wrote a letter to Maude, in which he plainly declared that he had left Marburn for good. He was weary of the place, and was going out into the world to search for opportunities which it was useless expecting would come to him at home. To some of his friends his presence in the family circle had become distasteful, and therefore it was better to relieve them of it. Perhaps, in the future, they might be led to see how they had misjudged him. It would be useless trying to discover his whereabouts, but from time to time he would write.

Then on a separate sheet of paper, which was only intended for Maude's eye, he added a few lines stating that she would doubtless divine another reason for his sudden departure. Even to her it was hardly advisable to say more.

Having posted the letter, he hurried to the station and

took a ticket for London, which, however, was not his first destination, for at Boxley, a small station some ten miles from London, he left the train and gave up his ticket.

This was part of his scheme for eluding the police, who he felt convinced would soon be searching for him as the perpetrator of the murderous assault committed on Squire Ingham. From Boxley he walked on to London, and, on arriving there, made certain changes in his dress, exchanging his well-cut clothes for others of a coarser and much less fashionable description. After that he chose a very humble lodging, suitable both to his appearance and his purse.

In all this he would have been extremely surprised had he known that his every action was noted by a Marburn man, and would be faithfully reported to another inhabitant of the village in which he had been living for so many months.

But the fact was, that hardly had Gerald left Crossland's house, that morning, when the latter set off to the cottage of a man named Joe Brown. Joe was a cockney by birth, but at eighteen years of age he had taken a place as groom in the neighborhood of Marburn. Finally, after various changes—for he had his peculiarities—he drifted to Marburn and entered Crossland's service. For some time the latter bore with his faults, among which were a tendency to exaggeration in speech and a partiality to drink, as he was clever with horses, but the end came when Joe added dishonesty to his other failings. That was the last straw, and Crossland dismissed him. Instead, however, of prosecuting him, he made him sign a paper, in which he confessed his delinquencies. This confession placed him

in Crossland's power, and Joe proved useful to his former master on occasions when discretion and silence were more necessary than a tender conscience. It is remarkable, by the way, that in dealing with horses a tender hand is much more valuable than a tender conscience. Joe was remarkably clever both in breaking in and in showing off and selling a horse. In all these branches of horsemanship Crossland still found his services invaluable. Joe might, indeed, have been called an unattached member of his household staff.

"Ah, Joe, how are you?" he exclaimed, as he entered his cottage. "Glad to find you still at home."

Joe looked at him suspiciously, being doubtful as to what this solicitude about his health and whereabouts might portend.

"Oh, I be'm all right, sir, thank you," he replied, cheerfully, muttering, however, to himself: "I wonder what his little game is now." Joe had not too exalted an opinion of his own merits. Early in life he had arrived at the conclusion that when people seemed solicitous about his welfare their interests rather than his own were the motives of their tender inquiries.

"Like to earn two pounds a week?" asked Crossland, abruptly, after a moment's pause.

"Well, sir, that depends," replied Joe, cautiously.

"Oh, it's easy work," said Crossland, as if in answer to the question that the man had not asked. "Easy work. No risk. Good pay. Now, then, be quick. Yes, or no?"

"Which it is yes, with many thanks. Two pounds a week ain't to be sneezed at."

"Very well, then, listen to me for your instructions. You know Mr. Gerald Hartley, of course? All right.

He's going to leave Marburn to-day. Perhaps in a few minutes. You must follow him and find out where he goes to. Understand? And you must stay near and keep your eye upon him. Of course, all your expenses will be paid, too. Now, then, be off in ten minutes, and send me a line every morning."

Crossland handed over to Joe five pounds toward his expenses, and then, with a few words of caution as to the need of not being detected in his work, he went home, feeling confident that Joe would do his best to earn his two pounds a week.

Crossland next paid a visit to the lowly dwelling of Mr. Sikes. As he expected, and indeed hoped, the man was from home. According to Mrs. Sikes, his sister-in-law, with whom he lodged, pressing business had called him away that morning quite early.

Ah, I suppose a telegram came for him quite unexpectedly in the middle of the night," remarked Crossland, ironically, on hearing this piece of news. "I should think Bill's society is a good deal sought after, Mrs. Sikes?"

"Yes, sir, Bill he have a many friends," said Mrs. Sikes, failing to catch the full meaning of the remark—at least, so she pretended.

"I don't wonder at that, Mrs. Sikes. Well, the next time you write to him just say that one of his friends round the corner there, Wilkins, the constable, wants to have a little of his company. You won't forget, Mrs. Sikes?" and he gave her a look full of meaning.

"No, sir, I'll be sure and give him your message," said the woman, unabashed, and speaking as cheerfully as if the absent Mr. Sikes would be delighted to hear that Mr. Wilkins was hankering after his society.

Crossland felt convinced that his message in some way or other, even without the aid of post-office, would reach its destination.

"Now, that's what I call a good morning's work," said he to himself, as he strolled home. "Brown will find out where Hartley makes tracks to, and that is most important for me to know. It is equally important that Sikes keeps away from here for some time, and I fancy my message will have its due effect on him. He will understand that I don't intend to let him off this time, and he knows pretty well that the magistrates will make it hot for him on his next appearance before them."

In the afternoon of that day the old vicar called at Ivy Cottage, and in the course of conversation with Mrs. Hartley and Maude said: "A sad thing this accident of the squire's! I have just been to the Hall. He lies unconscious. They are in great distress."

"Accident! Squire Ingham! Unconscious! What do you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Hartley, in amazement.

"Didn't you know the poor squire was shot last night in Marden Spinney?" asked the vicar, in a tone of surprise, for all the villagers knew the news by that time.

"No, indeed. Never heard a word of it. Maude, my dear, what is the matter?"

The girl's needlework had fallen from her hands. She was deathly pale.

"I—I don't feel very well," she faltered, "I think I will go upstairs."

"Ah, do. Go and lie down. You have not been well all day," said her mother, adding, as the door closed after her: "She got up late with a bad headache. Poor child! She inherits them from me."

The vicar expressed his concern, also his confidence in the curative power of certain remedies dear to the minds of our ancestors; and then he proceeded to discuss the matter of the squire's accident.

"It seems," he said, "the keepers had been worrying him with tales of poachers, and feeling irritated at their failure to make any captures, he went out himself last night, about half-past three o'clock, to see if the watchers were doing their duty or if he could himself discover anything of the poachers. No one knew that he had gone but Mrs. Ingham, and, at last, becoming uneasy at his continued absence, she called her son up and sent him out to look for his father. Poor Eustace, poor fellow! It was a great shock to him to find his father lying unconscious under the trees, where the birds of which he had been so jealous were still quietly roosting." And, taking his spectacles off, the old man rubbed them gently. The squire and he had been neighbors for more than fifty years, and the squire's son was looked upon by him almost as if he were his own.

"But will he not recover?" asked Mrs. Hartley. "Is he not likely to recover?"

"While there is life there is hope," said the other; "that is what the doctors say, and they generally say it when the hope is small. Poor Ingham! Poor, poor fellow!" And the good man sighed to think how useless and selfish had been the life that was wellnigh over, and how his old friend had persistently disregarded the gently given counsels he had as persistently bestowed upon him from time to time.

After he had gone Mrs. Ingham went up to Maude and found her lying on her bed, looking pale and tearful, but feeling better, so she said.

"Lie still, dear, and try to sleep," said the mother, bathing her brow gently with eau-de-cologne. Then, to Maude's relief, she went away, leaving her alone with her great trouble.

Could anything have been worse than that Gerald should have shot the father of the man she loved?

And she could speak to no one but Gerald of this grievous matter. Oh, how she longed for her brother to come home! She lay so still she could hear every sound in the hall below; but the footstep for which she listened never came.

By and by she rose, and, bathing her face and hands, tried to make herself look as usual, and went downstairs and listened as best she could to her mother's talk about the retribution which had come upon the man who had been so uncourteous to them of late. "He has never prospered," said the good lady, with something of Job Turner's spirit, "since he behaved so badly to us in forbidding all intercourse between the Hall and the Cottage. First, he lost his property, and now he has all but lost his life."

That evening Maude contrived to sit up alone, waiting for Gerald's return. The others wondered a little at his continued absence, still they thought he might be staying with Crossland; some one had seen him go in that direction in the morning; and so, telling Maude not to wait up long, as she was not well, and he could let himself in with his latch-key, they one after another retired to their own rooms.

Maude waited long, but in her heart she did not expect her brother to return; and, at last, slowly and sorrowfully, she went up to her own bedroom and went to bed but not to sleep.

The events of the previous night stood out with hideous distinctness in her mind, filling her again with horror. Gerald's appearance, with torn clothes, bespattered with mud; the blood upon his hands and face, his explanation that he had wounded, perhaps killed, some one. The news she had heard that day, with a terrible sinking at her heart, that Squire Ingham had been shot in Marden Spinney. And now Gerald's flight—for such she felt sure it was. All these pointed to the one terrible fact that he had wounded, perhaps given the death-blow, to Eustace Ingham's father. "Oh, if it had only been any one else, my trouble would have been less!" she moaned. "Oh, why should it just happen to be he? Oh, cruel, cruel blow! He will die! he will die! and his death will separate Eustace and me!"

Then she chid herself for selfishness in thinking of that at such a time. Why, if the squire died, Gerald, her brother, whom, in spite of all his faults, she loved so dearly—Gerald might be hung for murdering him. He was known to have used threatening language against him, Gerald himself had told her that. He had gone, with his gun, to Marden Spinney the same night, had fired it, and then had lost it there. Had they found it?

"Oh, foolish me!" thought poor Maude, starting up in bed and staring with horror into the darkness, "why did I not go early this morning to seek it? I never thought what evidence it would be against him. Could I go now?"

Starting up, she rose, drew aside her window-curtain and looked out. The night was dark; heavy rain-clouds hid the moon from view. It would be impossible, even if she dare venture to go there alone, for her to find anything without the help of a good lantern, and that

would probably reveal her presence to others and bring suspicion upon her brother. And some one else must have found the gun by now.

She crept into bed again, shivering, but not with cold, and then her excited fancy seemed to see Gerald, her handsome brother, with that wild look of horror on his face which had frightened her so the night before, standing a prisoner at the bar in a court of justice, while the judge pronounced the dreadful sentence of penal servitude for life.

For after all they could not really bring him in guilty of the greater crime of murder.

A felon! A convict for life!

Oh! he did well to escape, to hide. But she would never see him any more. He would never dare show himself even to her. Always, forever, over his head would be hanging the sword of Damocles. The hand of justice might find him.

Suddenly, as if to make the contrast more terrible, her thoughts reverted to one happy day in the now distant past, before her father's death. It was her birthday. She was reading, or rather her book had fallen from her hands, and she was lost in happy day-dreams as she sat on a garden-seat on the beautiful lawn of their old home. Gerald came up with a lovely rose for her, and throwing himself on the grass at her feet, talked to her more affectionately than he had ever done before, telling her she was his favorite sister and he knew she always understood him better than did any of the others. How proud and pleased she was as he went on to say he hoped she would never marry, that he wanted her always to live with him. She declared in return that he was her favorite brother, and that she would never, never leave him. So she

thought and so she meant at the mature age of sixteen. But that was before she met Eustace. And now, oh, the pity of it! Gerald had shot the father of the man she loved! Gerald a felon! A convict for life!

Oh, how could she bear the thought and live! She would never, never be happy any more while this dreadful danger threatened Gerald.

By and by, after what seemed to her to be hours of this agony, the poor girl fell into a troubled sleep. And then she dreamt that she was seeking, seeking Gerald in a great and gloomy wood. It was dark there under the trees and cold, she shivered in her sleep; and it seemed to her as if she had been searching a long time, and she was very tired. All at once, just as she was despairing of finding him for whom she looked, she came to the opening of a small cave and saw him in it, crouching by a small wood fire. When he looked up and saw her a very pitiful expression came into his face, and he said, imploringly: "Maude, have mercy, save me! I've found just a little peace and tolerable safety here—don't tell them where I am." And, at that, she cried aloud: "I never will." And with the cry she awoke.

It was early morning. The first gray light was stealing through the closed blinds.

Turning her face away from it toward the wall, Maude said, in a low tone of great determination: "God helping me, *I will keep his secret. I will save him.*"

The morning's post brought Gerald's letter, which gave much pain to the other members of the little family, though to Maude it caused a feeling of relief. At any rate he had got safely away.

Before the day was over she went to see Crossland and ascertain whether he was aware of her brother's

movements. Gerald might have taken him into his confidence.

Crossland was not altogether unprepared for her visit. If Gerald had left home unknown to his friends, and concealing his future movements from them, to whom would they naturally apply for information but to him?

Maude went straight to the point. "Mr. Crossland," she said, after they had exchanged greetings, "Gerald has left home. Can you, without any breach of confidence, give me any information as to his movements?"

Without a moment's hesitation Crossland replied: "Not the slightest. In fact, Gerald left me yesterday without telling me that he intended to leave home."

"And had you no suspicion of his intention?" persisted Maude. She looked ill and unhappy. Her appearance might have touched him if he had been less selfish.

"My dear Miss Hartley," he answered, "if I am to help you we must be perfectly frank with each other. Let me ask you this question: Do you know of any pressing reason why Gerald should escape from Marburn?" And he looked searchingly at her. "Remember, I don't want to force your confidence," he hastily added. "I don't ask what that reason was, or is."

"Mr. Crossland," replied Maude, looking up at him confidently, for his tone was very kind and his manner most sympathetic, "I will be frank. For I feel I can *trust you.*"

Crossland's reply was a slight bow. Inwardly he was full of rejoicing. To be trusted was something to the good.

"Two nights ago," went on Maude, "when Gerald was out duck-shooting he had the misfortune to wound some one, accidentally of course, and—"

"And now let me finish," interrupted Crossland. "Confidence for confidence. That some one proved to be Squire Ingham, who, with some keepers, was in Marden Spinney on the lookout for poachers. Lately they have been very busy among the squire's game. Gerald was known to be on bad terms with the squire, had been heard, indeed, to utter threats against him. He was recognized making his escape from Marden Spinney, and so, fearful of being arrested on the charge of unlawfully wounding, or—something even worse," he paused, and looked significantly at the girl. "Gerald thought it best to make his escape. Is that how you put things together?" he concluded by asking with an inquiring look.

"Yes, yes, something like that," murmured Maude, who felt almost stifled with the intensity of her emotion.

"Some of this," he went on, "I gathered from Gerald himself; one or two items I learned from another source, and the rest is pure conjecture. For, as I said before, Gerald did not intimate to me his intention of leaving Marburn."

"And does suspicion rest on him?" asked Maude, through her tears.

"Ah, that I can't say," replied Crossland. "The most I can affirm is this, the police authorities entertain no suspicion, for they have issued bills offering a reward for the conviction of the person, or persons, concerned in the attempt made on Mr. Ingham's life."

"Thank God for that!" cried poor Maude, fervently, clasping her hands.

Just before taking her leave she asked: "If you should hear from Gerald and feel at liberty to tell me—"

"My dear Miss Hartley," he interrupted, "you may

rely upon me at all times for any help I can give you under these trying circumstances."

"Oh, thank you," she added, earnestly; "thank you very much." And she could not say any more, but turned hastily away to conceal the tears which again streamed down her face.

As Crossland stood at the hall door watching her go slowly away a triumphant smile played for an instant about his mouth. He thought he was progressing well, also, in that direction.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONCERNING THE RUNAWAY.

"E meglio che si dici qui fuggi che qui mori."

(Better it be said, here he ran away than here he died.)

—ITALIAN PROVERB.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like a toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head."

—SHAKESPEARE.

IN the very humble lodging to which Gerald had gone in London he began, at his leisure, to study the problem of what he was to do with himself. Where should he go? What should he do? It would be safer to escape from England, and his slender purse made it necessary that he should find some employment in whatever country he made his home. At last, he would be obliged to work, or starve. There was no longer any alternative.

A week passed and this weighty problem was still unsolved. Decision of character, except in the pursuit of

his own pleasures, had never been Gerald's strong point. Nor was his a nature to be braced up by adversity or strengthened in the hour of need and danger. Some characters display unexpected and startlingly deep resources in times of trial. He was not one of these. On the contrary, any sudden emergency—outside the mere physical world, that is—tended rather to paralyze his energies.

In the meantime he saw with dismay the gradual attenuation of his slender purse. This was hardly calculated to encourage him, even if it proved an additional stimulus to his maturing some speedy plan of action. And, finally, he was indebted to another for the suggestion of what we may call a start in life—such as it was.

One afternoon, some ten days after his arrival in London, he was sitting in the private bar of a tavern, endeavoring to clear his brain and quicken his ideas by the aid of stimulants. Experience had not taught him that such resources rather tended to obscure than brighten the intellect. But with some people even the teaching of a bitter experience sink slowly into the mind.

"Hullo, mate," cried a man, who was sitting near him, "you seem down in your luck to-day. What's up?"

Gerald turned indignantly toward the speaker, who, by his dress, was evidently a sergeant in some cavalry regiment.

"Oh, no offense, sir, I hope," replied the man, as if in answer to his look; "no offense, sir, but I don't like to see a gentleman looking so sad and downcast."

Somewhat mollified by this more respectful mode of address, Gerald replied: "Well, things do look rather black just now."

"Sorry to hear it, sir, sorry to hear it," answered the sergeant, heartily. He had detected in Gerald's bearing

that he was something more than his dress betokened. "But there's many a young gentleman like you," he went on, tentatively, "looking out for a fresh opening in life," and he cast a piercing glance at Gerald.

The young man had given a little start at the words "a fresh opening." That was just what he wanted.

"Yes, sir," went on the man, not unobservant of the effect of his words, "and I will say this, for a *gentleman* there's no place like the army just now. Get a commission in no time! And more than that, until that time comes you'll meet lots of men like yourself in the ranks."

"Broken gentlemen?" suggested Gerald, with a tinge of bitterness in his voice.

"Broken, sir?" cried the sergeant, somewhat indignantly. "Not a bit of it. Gentlemen who will go into the army, and who can't wait until they have passed their examinations, and some who can't pass them if they wait forever!" and he smiled significantly at Gerald.

"They haven't given *you* a commission yet, sergeant?" suggested Gerald, with a smile.

"Me, sir? No, and never would," returned the other, somewhat bitterly. "They want a soldier for an officer, but they want a gentleman, too! In times of war I might have a chance, but in times of peace I and the likes of me might wait forever. And more than that. What should I do with a commission? I should be like a fish out of water. But with a gentleman, as I think you are, things would be different."

For some time Gerald made no reply to the sergeant's insinuations and suggestions; he was deeply considering the prospect which the man's words opened out to him.

Things were very different with him now from what they were when he had been so indignant because Uncle

Jack had suggested the same idea. To enter the army, even as a private, seemed to him a ready way out of some of his present difficulties. In the ranks he might be just as safe from detection as in a foreign land. His daily bread would be assured him, and above all there was the possibility, as he knew well, of obtaining a commission.

The thought was a welcome one now; with the natural buoyancy of youth, his imagination, freed for the moment from the dark cloud which overshadowed him, bore him forward to the time when it should have dispersed entirely. Instead of hiding from the stern hand of justice while one lay wounded, it might be unto death, by his own hand, he would then be in an honored and honorable position such as any gentleman would be glad to occupy. For Squire Ingham might recover, and with recovery might come a desire to overlook the past and allow his assailant to escape unpunished.

Such reflections were very pleasant, and Gerald consoled himself with them as he sat pondering over the sergeant's proposal.

Finally his mind was made up. He would enlist.

The next day he began to learn his duties as a recruit in the 16th Lancers, then stationed at Aldershot.

He had enlisted under the name of Henry Barnes.

Meantime, at home, Maude found it a grievous thing to have to bear about with her his secret. Those were sad days for her, but her character gained in strength and sweetness as she daily strove to forget her own grief that she might soothe her mother by her cheerfulness of manner.

Mrs. Hartley was in despair. Gerald was her favorite child and he had left her without one parting caress or

one word of farewell. But even in the midst of her grief she could find excuses for him. The world had used him roughly, unmerited misfortune had come upon him, obscuring the bright prospects which lay before him. Disappointment, the monotony of the humdrum life at Marburn and the neglect of their one rich and powerful relation had preyed upon his mind. She entirely overlooked both her own weak indulgence of him and his intense selfishness and want of energy.

Still, in the midst of her grief, a ray of hope came to her. Did it spring from the thought that out of sheer desperation and disgust with his past life Gerald would force himself to the exertion of his mental and moral capabilities, and that from the dead stepping-stone of his dead self he might rise to nobler things? Not in the least. Her hope was that Gerald would return to her own home, because, humble though it was, it offered to him certain comforts and even luxuries which otherwise he could not have.

Some time ago a young man of our acquaintance, over-indulged by a fond mother, took it into his head to go to Australia to make his fortune. His mother was in despair. But his letters after a six months' residence at the Antipodes filled her with hopes of his speedy return. He complained of having to sleep upon sacks! Feather-beds had passed out of his reach. *Longing for them, she knew, would soon send him home. It never occurred to the poor mother that a much nobler satisfaction might arise from the conviction that her son was in all seriousness setting to work to earn money and provide feather-beds for himself.

Mrs. Hartley was not unlike this mother; and her unreasonable partiality for Gerald placed the other mem-

bers of the family in a most awkward position. For she resented the slightest remark which seemed to reflect upon his character either as a son or a brother.

Uncle Jack got out of patience with her; but respect for her grief made him refrain from expressing his real opinion of his nephew's conduct—in her presence, that is. In fact, George Turner was the only person before whom he felt at liberty to speak plainly.

“Between ourselves, George,” said he, “I am heartily glad, except of course for his mother's sake, that Gerald has taken this step. Knocking about a little in the world will do him good. If it does not stir him up to work really hard at something it may lead him to appreciate the home he has run away from.”

“You believe in the school of adversity?” said George, smiling.

“Well, yes, if a man has any real grit in him. And I suppose Gerald must have a little concealed somewhere. The Hartleys generally had. Unfortunately, in Gerald's case it seems to take such a precious lot of digging to get to it. But then, after all, he isn't the only one to blame. Train up a child, etc. Training, sir, training will tell.”

They were interrupted by the sound of the passing bell, and then—

“ . . . Each looked on each,

Up in the midst a thought grew without speech.”

“So he has gone,” said Turner, softly.

“Ay, poor squire,” sighed Uncle Jack.

“It's an awful thing to be cut off suddenly in that way,” said George. “I wonder who shot him?”

"One of those poaching fellows, I expect," replied the other. "Poor Ingham! I'm sorry for his children. Nice young people! No airs about them."

"Every one loves them," said Turner, enthusiastically.

"As they well may. It must have been a fearful fortnight for them, while their father lingered on from day to day, and they knew not whether he would live, or even regain consciousness, or not.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AN UNEXPECTED BLOW.

"Oh, break, my heart! poor bankrupt, break at once!"

—SHAKESPEARE. *Romeo and Juliet*.

THREE months had passed since Squire Ingham's death. Three busy months for Eustace. He had been engaged, not only in winding up his father's affairs, but also in finding a home for his mother and sister.

Mrs. Ingham had decided to leave Marburn Hall. For she no longer required such a large house and establishment, and the land attached to the Hall, merely held for the shooting it afforded, was now a burden entailing heavy expense—for gamekeepers are costly—and the possession of the shooting which he valued so much had been the indirect cause of the squire's death. It was therefore no wonder that the whole place had become distasteful to her, and she desired to go quite out of the neighborhood.

Her own property, Birley Court, was let, as we have

seen, and would not be free for two years. Their first necessity, therefore, was to find a suitable house at a sufficient distance from a place connected with so many painful associations.

For some time Eustace had his hands quite full. The term desirable, as it applies to residences, "connotes," as the logicians have it, has many qualities, especially to persons who have been living all their lives in such a place as Marburn Hall. Climate, scenery, society, ample accommodation for a staff of servants—these and other details have to be taken into consideration. And however desirable a residence may seem, when described in the eloquent periods of an advertisement, it not infrequently loses many of its vaunted charms when seen and inspected by the critical eye of those who seek to turn a "desirable residence" into a real home. Hence there were many disappointments and much delay before a suitable place could be found. Finally, however, Barnham Lodge, near Chichester, seemed to offer the most advantages with the fewest objections. The Inghams decided upon taking it, and then, until the actual moment for removing thither arrived, Eustace found a little spare time for devoting to his own private affairs, which had been too long neglected.

Maude Hartley was by no means unconnected with these private affairs. Was she ever far removed from the young man's thoughts? Was she not, in the happy future he pictured to himself, to form an integral part of his life? Were they not hand-in-hand to walk together along the path of life, till "death do us part"? It was thus in his dreams—happy day-dreams—Eustace had mapped out the future. For now there seemed no reason why the course of "true love" should not "run

smooth." It was true, certainly, that of late, both before and after his father's death, their intercourse had been of a very limited nature. But then, force of circumstances and not mutual inclination had tended to keep them apart. His feelings toward her had not changed, nor would he believe that hers would lightly change. And although no word of love had ever been exchanged between them, he fondly believed that he had won her heart. "Trifles light as air are," to the lover as well as to the jealous, "confirmations strong as proofs of Holy Writ."

It was also true that, on the rare occasions when of late chance had brought them together, she seemed to shrink a little from him and appeared less cordial in manner, but he saw nothing ominous to his suit in this. He knew how fond she was of her brother, and that Gerald's disappearance from home must have caused her a great shock. Her altered appearance—of late she had lost her usual color as well as high spirits—amply proved this. And her friends at Ivy Cottage had lamented in his presence that anxiety on her brother's account was weighing terribly upon her mind. Well, it would be his happiness to try and console her in her grief, and by his loving care and attention make up to her for the absence of Gerald. And then, when they were engaged, she would have a claim on his services in the endeavor to trace her brother, and when he was found, to procure for him, if possible, some opening in life suitable to his inclination and capacity.

Thus reasoned the lover. He had a rude awakening to these sweet but illusive day-dreams.

At last, the first three months of mourning for his father were over, the pressure of business had slackened

and the day had come when he felt quite at liberty to give utterance to the feelings which he had cherished so long in his heart. Now, at length, he was in every way free to urge his suit upon Maude. Without any misgivings that she would not be ready to accept the affection or receive his offer favorably, he set off to Ivy Cottage to seek for an interview with her.

On the way there, however, he met Maude taking her morning walk across the fields.

"How fortunate!" he exclaimed, after they had exchanged a few casual remarks. "For, do you know—Maude—Miss Hartley, I was coming to Ivy Cottage on purpose to see you."

"Were you?" she replied, in a faint tone, a momentary blush chasing away the pallor from her cheeks. Did she divine the object of his visit? Something in his manner might have suggested that it was not intended to be a mere formal call. His ardent look sent a thrill rather of sorrow than joy into her heart. And her limbs began to tremble as she slowly walked by his side.

"Yes, Miss Hartley—Maude, let me call you," and without waiting for her consent, perhaps taking it for granted, he went on: "Yes, Maude, I was coming to see you, but my tongue was tied for a time. However, now I am free to tell you all I feel, free to tell you I love you and ask you give me this," and he took hold of one of her slender hands and looked pleadingly and lovingly into her face.

Maude allowed her hand to remain for a moment passive in his, as she stood with eyes drooping to the ground.

Then, gently disengaging her hand, and raising her eyes slowly and sorrowfully to his, she whispered, in

accents faint and mournful almost to despair: "No, Eustace, it can never be as you wish. I *cannot* be your wife."

Eustace stood as if petrified. For a time speech failed him utterly. Heaven seemed to have faded away from his eyes. "Not—be—my—wife, dearest?" he stammered out, at length.

For a moment Maude stood silent, her eyes bent on the ground, and, except for the heaving of her bosom, motionless as a statue.

"I cannot be your wife," she echoed, in hard, mechanical tones.

"But surely, dearest love," he began, in soft yet earnest tones, "I was not mistaken in the old times—you did love me once?" and there was a pathetic tremor in his voice which thrilled her very soul.

"Eustace, why distress yourself—and—and me—with such questions? Is it not enough to know—"

"Enough to know that I was either mistaken or—deceived in the past?" he asked, in passionate tones.

"Enough to know that you have changed, and that I have lost you. But forgive me, dearest, if my words have pained you," he added, more gently, as he noticed the agonized expression that came into her eyes. Then, once more, seizing her hands in his strong clasp, he exclaimed, in tones of passionate entreaty: "Tell me, love, that it is my ears that have deceived me now, and that you are still true, still unchanged and that you love me now as I swear you did, not six short months ago."

"Leave me, Eustace," murmured poor Maude, "leave me now and forever, for I can give you no other answer." And once more she uttered in faint, mechanical tones the answer fatal to his hopes.

"It can never be as you wish. I cannot be your wife."

"Tell me, at least, what has come between us, Maude," urged Eustace, looking intently at her.

"Tell you?" she began, slowly, as if doubtful of his meaning. Then suddenly, as if the whole force of his question had just flashed across her mind, she gasped out almost in shrieking tones: "Tell you that! Tell you that! Never, oh, never! Ask me anything but that." Then, as if to hide some frightful sight from her eyes, she covered her face with her hands. Then the sobs came quick and convulsive, as if from a heart breaking with emotion, and the bitter, scalding tears burst through the fingers half covering her face.

Eustace looked at her aghast with horror and overwhelmed with pain at her distress.

What was this terrible thing that had come between them?

Presently she grew calmer; the fierceness of the storm was over. A few moments more, and then she held out her hand.

"Farewell, Eustace," she whispered, in tremulous accents, "farewell, dearest love, and forever. Heaven itself cannot remove the barrier that has come between us."

Then, without another word, she turned and left him.

As if rooted to the spot, and altogether powerless to follow her, Eustace saw her walk away with slow, uncertain steps. In a few moments a bend of the road hid her from his sight.

He was alone. And it seemed to him as if the gates of Paradise were closed upon him. For she had said Heaven itself could not remove the barrier which had come between them.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

UNCLE JACK'S QUESTIONS.

"He was a man of honor, of noble and generous nature."
—LONGFELLOW.

"HEAVEN itself cannot remove the barrier which has come between us."

These words of Maude's, uttered in heartbroken accents, rang in Eustace Ingham's ears again and again as he slowly walked away from her presence, and they sounded the death-knell of his hopes. They were fateful words against which there seemed no appeal. The girl's face, as she uttered them, plainly told him that. They had come from a heart overflowing with despair! "Dearest love, farewell."

Yes, loving, and yet renouncing her love, she had sent him away. Fate was cruel to them both.

Several times as he walked home to Marburn Hall the impulse came upon him to retrace his steps and fly back to Maude. He had yielded too easily; too coldly urged his suit. He had bowed to her decision as readily as if it cost him nothing to obey. Oh, he had played the part of a cold, careless, hard-hearted lover—the pale reflection of one who really loved! Why did he not plead in warmer terms? Insist upon knowing the full meaning of those words that parted them? Drag the secret from her? Why, to know the mystery might be to find it had lost its mysteriousness!

"Heaven itself cannot remove the barrier."

No child's words. But wrung from the heart of a woman, loving, true and suffering.

They pronounced an irrevocable decision. The stars in their courses had fought against them both.

The next day he called upon Uncle Jack at Willow Cottage.

"Mr. Hartley, I have come to say good-by," he said; "to-morrow I leave Marburn and England. Marburn forever."

"Marburn forever!" echoed Hartley, in amazement, looking incredulously at the young man.

"Yes, forever. I have no longer any ties here. My mother and sister will have gone in a few days—and the whole neighborhood has grown distasteful to me. The old family home has slipped away from me; my father came to an untimely end here; and now—and now—" Here he broke off, and looking earnestly at Uncle Jack, asked: "Can you divine the last blow that fate has inflicted upon me?"

The other hesitated a moment. Then he said, slowly: "Well, as I know what your hopes were—"

"Yes, what my hopes *were*. You speak rightly," interrupted Eustace; "they were, they belong to the past; with the present and future they have nothing to do."

"I am not altogether unprepared for this," said Hartley, after reflecting a few moments, "for lately Maude has looked as if all *her* hopes of happiness were buried. What has come between you young people? I was hoping to see both my nieces happily married within a short time. I gather from your words, ay, and looks, too, that you have not changed."

"No, I have not changed," replied Eustace, shaking

his head as if to emphasize the words, and speaking in accents full of sadness.

"And if I know Maude at all," went on Hartley, "fickleness is no part of her character."

"Nor, as I believe, has Miss Hartley changed. But she spoke yesterday of some insurmountable obstacle to our marriage. There, I can tell you no more at present," Eustace continued, noticing Hartley's look of surprise. "In fact she said no more than that herself. To use her own words, 'Heaven itself cannot remove the barrier.'"

"This is very mysterious," said Hartley; "but I can give you no explanation of Maude's conduct. I know nothing of any obstacle. At the same time she is not the girl to conjure up difficulties."

Here they were interrupted by the arrival of George Turner and Grace Hartley, both looking the picture of happiness, as Eustace thought.

"Well, and how is the furnishing progressing?" asked Uncle Jack, smiling. "How much longer are you good folks going to be over the choice of your household goods? Let me see, you began six months ago, didn't you?"

"No, indeed, not quite so long as that," cried Grace. "You see we go about our work on certain definite rules."

"Ah, on a definite system; I see. Well, I should like to hear it. One is never too old to learn."

"Oh, I'll explain it in a moment," replied Grace, merrily. "In the first place we don't furnish by contract. We don't go in for the hire system, and we won't have suites, no, not at any price. We've been fortunate enough to get a lovely old-fashioned house, and I insist upon having old-fashioned furniture."

"And supposing Turner insisted upon having furniture

new-fashioned, quite up to date, and presumably ugly?" said Uncle Jack.

"Then we should quarrel," solemnly protested Grace, clasping her hands in mock despair. "But there, I don't think I ever could have fallen in love with a man who had such awful tastes. And what a comfort it is to think George has exquisite tastes!"

"I think it's a comfort George isn't given to self-conceit, or I'm sure you would spoil him with such gross flattery," replied Hartley, dryly.

"Oh, Grace doesn't mean half she says," exclaimed George, laughing; "in private, I can assure you, she takes it out of me very considerably."

"Oh, fie, George, don't tell tales out of school!" cried Grace, holding out her finger in a menacing manner. "By the by, uncle, what do you think," she added, excitedly, "I had such a handsome present this morning. From a stranger, too. A hundred-pound note! It came folded in a sheet of paper, inscribed: 'A wedding gift from a friend of your father's.'"

"Ah, poor Gerald made many friends in his lifetime," replied Uncle Jack; "he cast his bread on many waters."

"And after many days I am finding some of it," said Grace, in a low tone.

"How happy they seem!" sighed Eustace, when the lovers had taken their leave; "and they deserve to be happy," he added, heartily. "Turner has been a wonderfully good son and Miss Hartley an equally good daughter."

"And niece," added Uncle Jack. "I shall never forget what a hearty welcome she gave her poor relation."

Eustace gave him a somewhat quizzical look; of late the young man had seriously begun to doubt whether

Uncle Jack was entitled to pose as a poor relation. A secret confided to others can hardly remain a secret long; the truth generally leaks out, sooner or later. And the old family lawyer had given him a broad hint that the new owner of the Marburn estate was not quite a stranger in Marburn.

But Hartley bore the young man's look unflinchingly.

"Shall we see you at the wedding?" he asked. "It comes off some time in April, I think. Easter week."

Eustace shook his head. "No, I expect to be far away from England in April. As soon as ever my people are settled in their new home I am going abroad."

"I'm very sorry for all this, Ingham," said Uncle Jack, as he shook hands warmly with him at parting.

For some time after his departure Hartley sat pondering over Maude's conduct. He wearied his brain in vain, endeavoring to conjecture the nature of the obstacle which she asserted rendered her marriage with her lover impossible. He was averse from questioning the girl herself; to do so might seem to be betraying Ingham's confidence. It seemed, moreover, useless labor. Secret motives, carefully concealed from a lover, would scarcely be confided to himself. No, he must wait. Perhaps time might unravel the mystery, or indeed remove the obstacle itself, insuperable as it might seem at present.

Barely a month after Ingham's departure from Marburn Hartley heard some rumors, faint but startling, which seemed to throw a little light on the mystery which enshrouded Maude's refusal of Ingham's suit.

A whisper went round the place that his nephew, Gerald, had been out in the neighborhood of Marden Spinney on the night when Squire Ingham was shot. Nay, further, that he had been seen returning from the

fatal spot shortly after the squire had received the wound which eventually proved mortal.

Good-natured friends brought these reports to Uncle Jack. It is very remarkable how extremely good-natured some friends prove to be in hurrying to us with bad news. They are not always so ready with good news, probably imagining that the latter will run no risk of being spoiled by keeping.

“I thought you might like to know, don’t you know,” is the well-worn preface to the heralding of some disaster.

Some of these good-natured folk at Marburn further intimated that some people thought it a pity Gerald should have left home on the very morning after the sad occurrence had taken place. Of course it was merely a startling coincidence; startling, and under the circumstances, unfortunate. And then, how extremely unfortunate it was that the young man had been heard to utter such dreadful threats against the squire! For people would talk, and try and make two and two amount to five, or even more. Ah, it was a hard, uncharitable world! And they sadly shook their heads over the double share of original sin some people seemed to have inherited.

Secretly, for a time at least, Uncle Jack laughed at these reports. That persons should suspect Gerald, even for a moment, seemed to him incredible. The suspicion was too monstrous. Gerald had his faults, grievous ones, too, but that he could be guilty of a murderous assault upon an old man, why, the mere supposition was utterly preposterous! It was by no means certain that he had left home that night, and, even if that could be proved, to connect his presence near Marden Spinney

with a cold-blooded murder was surely the lowest depth to which the most slanderous and malicious person could possibly descend!

One statement could be easily verified, or rather disproved. It would be easy to ascertain whether Gerald had been away from home in the early hours of that fatal night. Maude would soon settle the question. He was sufficiently acquainted with the habits and customs of his relations at Ivy Cottage to know that Maude generally used to sit up until Gerald returned home, however late he might be.

The very first time he found her alone, therefore, he said: "Maude, my dear, I want to ask you a question, a very simple one," his tone was one of feigned carelessness.

"Yes, uncle, what is it?" quietly asked the girl, looking up from her work.

"You remember the night before Gerald left home?" and he looked inquiringly at her.

Maude started. The little color she had left her cheeks, while the work she was busy with fell from her nerveless fingers. Looking up at him with the eyes of a startled fawn, she faintly murmured: "Yes, I remember that night—very well."

"Do you remember about what time Gerald went to bed?" he asked again.

"I think it was a little before four," she replied, still in the same faint voice. She was too truthful to say that he had gone upstairs at eleven. That would have been the truth as far as it went. But she knew that the suppression of the fact that he came downstairs again would have made it in reality a lie.

"And did he say where he had been spending the even-

ing—and night, too, I suppose we should say?” continued her uncle.

“Uncle,” said Maude, rising from her chair and placing her hand upon his shoulder, looking at the same time pleadingly up at him, “you must not ask me any more questions, for I can’t tell you anything more.” Then her lips began to quiver and the tears came into her eyes.

Uncle Jack saw it would be both unfair and cruel to press her any further. It was plain that it had cost her exquisite suffering to answer even the other very simple question he had put to her. She was fearful of betraying secrets which concerned another, the missing Gerald.

“Very well, my dear,” said her uncle, at length, “I won’t press you any further. But I am sorry you don’t feel at liberty to trust me.”

Maude shook her head. She would not trust herself to utter another word; unwittingly she might reveal more than she intended. •

It seemed useless prolonging the interview, and so shortly after Uncle Jack left her, much to her relief.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CROSSLAND'S WOOING.

"I have loved you night and day
For many weary months."

—SHAKESPEARE. *Troilus and Cressida.*

"The love that follows us sometime is our trouble."

—SHAKESPEARE. *Macbeth.*

MAUDE had said farewell to her lover forever, and farewell, too, to her young life's happiness. From that hour days came and passed away bringing no respite to her grief. There could be no respite while memory survived. Each morning was ushered in with a hopeless dawn. Never could she and Eustace exchange vows of mutual love, or hope to be more than friends. Nay, it might be they would never meet again. For between them lay his father's blood, shed by the hand of her own brother. Yes, Gerald, her own idolized brother, albeit unwittingly, had done the deed which separated them forever.

Oh! the thought was agonizing, and the girl wrung her hands in despair each time it recurred to her. One hasty action, guiltless in intention, had marred the happiness of three lives.

The girl thought it was well, now that Gerald had left home. The sight of her pale face and looks eloquent in their silence of her bitter grief might have driven him to despair, the despair bred of remorse. No, it was

well he had gone; they were each spared the anguish of seeing the other's grief.

And Maude had a sorrow's crown of sorrow in hearing her mother harshly criticise her lover's conduct. For when Mrs. Hartley at last perceived that he and Maude cared for each other she was pleased, as she could not fail to be, and just in proportion to her pleasure was her disappointment when his attentions ceased. Of course during the squire's lifetime his tongue might have been tied, his actions fettered. But now, when all obstacles to his speaking out were removed, he had gone away and made no sign.

Maude had to bear each cruel word in silence. And every word uttered against her lover's honesty and good faith seemed to pierce her very heart. In defending the absent one she feared she might unconsciously be led to betray Gerald's secret—Gerald's secret to his own mother! For her sake and his she must endure this additional sorrow, and to shield the guilty must allow the innocent to be unjustly accused without uttering one word in his defense.

And there was the additional pang of daily witnessing Grace's happiness, and comparing her lot, so full of brightness and hope, with the fate measured out to herself.

As time passed on, Maude had another cause for anxiety. Crossland became a frequent visitor at the Cottage, and very quietly and unobtrusively, but still unmistakably, he began to show his devotion to her. It was with feelings of intense disquietude that she perceived that her tender, sympathizing friend was fast turning into an ardent lover. The mutual possession of Gerald's unhappy secret had necessarily become a bond of union

between them. And her position was becoming a difficult one. To check the ardor of one whom she thought so true and kind a friend of her own and of poor Gerald's, without paining him and seeming most ungrateful, was hard indeed.

One day, he came in the little drawing-room at Ivy Cottage, when she happened to be alone there, with what he called a budget of good news. Gerald was safe, and for once in his life most usefully employed, though she was not to ask where he was nor what he was doing, for it would be safer for her not to know.

Maude could quite understand this. It had been so difficult to keep what she knew already from the knowledge of the others. And, oh, how glad she was to know that he was really safe and hard at work!

"You have been so good to me," she said, gratefully, looking up at Crossland more kindly than was wise.

His face lighted up with hope. "And now," he said, gently, "may the bringer of good tidings talk to you a little about himself? Will you listen to me a short time? I'll be very brief."

"Oh, yes, yes," answered the girl, still so wrapped in the consideration of poor Gerald and herself that she forgot her newly acquired caution. "You have been so good, so *very good* to us both. And you have his gun quite safe, haven't you? And wouldn't it be better to destroy it? Or perhaps—yes, wouldn't it be better to put it back in its gun-case here? Then if it should be inquired for we could show them it in triumph."

"It is, indeed, most valuable evidence against him," said Crossland, with emphasis. "But you can trust it in my hands, Maude, can you not?"

"Oh, yes," she replied; "of course," and she was still

thinking so earnestly about Gerald that she did not notice her friend called her by her Christian name.

“Maude,” he repeated, and now she started a little and looked at him in surprise. He seemed excited, and very much in earnest. She could not meet his gaze, it seemed so full of power. “I will tell you all in a few minutes,” he went on. “I am a lonely, lonely man, all my life I have been alone. Surrounded with your dear ones, you can have no conception, Maude, what my utter loneliness has been. An only child, with an invalid mother, wrapped up in herself and the consideration of her health, and a father who was stern, and whom I feared more than loved until death took him from us, I have always lived a solitary, mournful life. And then I saw one whom I learned to love.” Here he paused and looked earnestly at Maude. “Love and hope changed my life,” he continued; “a future spent with her seemed heaven, after my lonely, unloved, miserable past. And then—and then—” his tone became sad as he slowly uttered the words, “before I could speak another came between us, and the cup of happiness was dashed from my lips. Oh, merciful heavens!” he exclaimed, clasping his hands, “what torments did I suffer to see them together, smiling, happy in each other’s love, while the brightness and joy had gone out of my life! Before me lay a future, cold, cheerless, hopeless, with no respite to my grief but the grave. Often I wished that I had never been born. Sometimes even the temptation came strong upon me to end—”

“No, no,” cried Maude, in terror-stricken tones, hastily interrupting him, “do not, do not say that,” and she laid her hand in her earnest entreaty upon his arm and looked beseechingly at him.

"Then better thoughts came to me," he went on, mournfully. "I lived on to suffer and suffer in silence. My love was altogether unsuspected by her who seemed lost to me forever." He paused for a moment or two, and then continued, in more cheerful tones: "At last, Fate, as if in pity for my grief, proved kind, and raised a barrier between the others—a barrier, terrible, insurmountable."

"No, no," cried Maude, wringing her hands despairingly, in her horror at hearing her own fate thus pronounced by another; "no, not insurmountable. Heaven will be merciful."

"Heaven itself cannot remove the barrier," interrupted Crossland, in accents solemn and fateful, "*for between them lies his father's blood!*"

With a shriek of mingled horror and despair Maude sank back on the couch, covering her face with her hands as if to shut out the terrible sight his words had conjured up. Her own words in his mouth! How solemnly they seemed to confirm the doom which she herself had pronounced against her own life's happiness!

She had instinctively divined the meaning of half his story and its application to herself, but of its full meaning she seemed oblivious. The thought of Crossland's misery had passed away from her mind at the bitter recollection of her own.

He directed her attention to the point she had for the moment forgotten. "Maude, dearest," he said, placing himself beside her and speaking in a tender, sympathetic manner, "I see you fully understand the import of my words. You will not prove less kind than Fate? You will come into my solitary, mournful life, to cheer and brighten it with your presence?"

Maude could not fail to understand him now, and a nervous shudder passed over her as he paused, awaiting her answer.

How could she soften her refusal? How best say no? Say no, and not seem too hard and cruel to one who had proved such a kind, sympathetic friend in her bitter anguish?

"Is—is this a time to think—of—of future happiness when the present—" she began, but the words seemed to choke her, she could not finish her sentence.

"When the present seems so dark?" said Crossland, hastily. "Together, dearest Maude, we will make the future happier. We will summon Gerald home, and together make life brighter for him. Forgive me, Maude, if I seem to choose the wrong time for speaking to you, but I lost you once through idly waiting. Let my love, once disappointed, plead for my forgiveness. I dare not run the risk of once more being too late."

"Mr. Crossland," said Maude, shaking her head mournfully, "love and I have said farewell forever; love such as you speak of I have none to give. Would you wish to marry one who has nothing to offer in return for what you give? Nothing but a heart full of sorrow and vain regrets and unsatisfied longings?"

"Yes, yes, I would," eagerly cried Crossland, "because I love you. At first, like a starving man, I should be satisfied with but little. A little, did I say? How much is that little? Your presence in my lonely home; the sight of your sweet face; the music of your voice; the clasp of your hand; your kindly interest in my daily life; the thought that none could part us; my hope that in time you would learn to love me; your pity that you did not. With all this I should feel like

a man sitting on the threshold of Paradise, waiting in sure confidence till the gates were opened. For, dearest Maude, remember, love begets love, and I could wait patiently until you opened the gates with the words, 'I love you.' "

Maude was both amazed and terrified with his passionate vehemence, so totally opposed to the cold, impassive demeanor which usually distinguished him.

Shrinking from him, as if fearful of being carried away by his impetuous pleading, she murmured: "No, no, Mr. Crossland, it can never be as you wish. I can never marry you."

"Maude, dearest," pleaded he, looking earnestly at her, "I will not take that as your final answer. I have surprised, startled you, my love carried me away. But do not bid me abandon all hope, do not send me from you in despair. Give me at least permission to try and win you?"

"No, no, you must not ask that. I cannot. I—I—dare not give you any hope," she hastily cried, fearful of giving him even the slightest encouragement. "We can never be more than friends."

"You call me a friend, and yet deny me the opportunity which the veriest stranger might expect," said Crossland, somewhat bitterly.

"Yes, I must do so; for your sake and mine. For I can *never*, *never* change and give you another answer."

There was a decision and firmness in the girl's manner which showed Crossland that all his pleading would be in vain. But he did not despair of ultimate success. He did not expect to win by fierce, passionate appeals or by violent protestations of his love. He had another last resource.

"Is that your final decision, Maude?" he asked.

"Yes," answered she, in low but decided tones. "And could—how could I ever dream of love and happiness," she went on, her thoughts reverting once more to her brother, "with Gerald's future so uncertain—his very safety, perhaps, trembling in the balance?"

"Perhaps it is because of his safety that I would ask you to pause and reconsider your decision," said Crossland, quietly, but with great meaning in his tone.

"What do you mean?" cried Maude, springing from her seat and looking at him in terrified amazement; "his safety has nothing to do with my decision. Mr. Crossland, pray explain yourself."

"I mean this," replied Crossland, speaking in calm, dispassionate accents, which formed a marked contrast with his late excited manner. "I mean this. Your brother's secret is not solely in my possession; the proofs against him are known, have all along been known by another. He is poor. The reward which he might earn is large, and therefore tempting. It is only my influence that has kept him silent so long; but whenever—"

"You have many moods, many ways of wooing," cried Maude, bitterly, looking at him in disgusted horror; "but lately you pleaded, and now you threaten. Then you asked for my love, now you would buy it with your silence. To gain your ends you would even betray your friend and the helpless girl who trusted in you!"

"Excuse me," calmly replied Crossland, "you entirely misunderstand the situation. I utter no threats. I whisper no word of betrayal. In fact, I make no sign

by word or deed; I simply stand aside—and—and allow matters to take their course.”

“No, you are too honorable to betray your friend,” cried Maude, scornfully, “you let others do your low, miserable work! And this is the man who called himself my friend,” she went on, in indignant tones, “who came to me with the offer of pretended sympathy and protestations of friendship! Who, just now, loudly expressed his love; who, knowing I loved another, implored me to marry him, and swore he would be content with the empty husks of an assumed affection. Oh, that men should be so cruel, so base and false, and that women should be such fools as to believe and trust them!” And then poor Maude, overcome with her feelings, sank back once more upon the couch, while the bitter sobs came quick and convulsive from her throbbing bosom.

For a moment or two Crossland stood looking at her in silence, but not unmoved. Cold, impassive and selfish as he was, just then a feeling of pity for her distress thrilled his soul. But he could not, would not draw back. For never had she appeared so lovely and so worthy of admiration and respect as in the last few moments. At one instant her eyes flashing with indignation, hurling at him scathing words of scornful reproach; the next, overcome by the very intensity of her righteous anger, bathed in tears, a woman conscious of her helplessness and impotent in her distress.

“You ask me why I seem so cruel, so unmanly?” he cried, at length. “You say I have no feelings! Deny me the power of loving because I can appear selfish and hard! You tell me my protestations of love were empty, idle words, that I was feigning a love I can never feel! You wonder how one who looks like a

man can prove so unmanly? It is because I love you and will not lose you, Maude, that I can stoop so low; it is because I love you and will not lose you that I seem so harsh and unkind! You tell me you love, and loving, you know what it is to lose. I have loved, too, and I have known what it is to lose. But I love you now in spite of your hard words, in spite of your scorn, in spite of your reproaches, in spite of your shrinking from me—yes, in spite of all that has passed, I love you a thousand times more than ever, and, now you are once more free, I will not lose you again—or, if I do—” he broke off abruptly and said: “But, no, I will not even think that possible.” Then, lowering his voice from the excited, strident tones in which he had been speaking, he almost whispered in her ear, as he clasped her hand in his. “Dearest Maude, send me but one little word bidding me hope, and *in the same hour you shall have in your hands the proofs of Gerald’s guilt.* His gun, his pocket-handkerchief and a letter addressed to him, all of which were picked up within a few yards from where the fatal shot was fired.”

The next moment Maude was alone.

CHAPTER XXX.

AN EXPECTED ENGAGEMENT.

“ . . . In all things
Mindful not of herself, but bearing the burden of others.”
—LONGFELLOW. *Tales of a Wayside Inn.*

CROSSLAND went home flushed with a sense of coming victory. He felt convinced that Maude must yield. Thoroughly believing, as she did, that her brother's fate was in her hands, she would not, dared not persevere in her refusal to marry him. And, indeed, to become his wife merely meant carrying her self-sacrifice a little further. Nay, rather, it might be the first step in that hard, narrow path; for the sacrifice of her love to Ingham was in no sense of the word voluntary; stern, imperious fate had made that necessary. He knew that her terrified imagination conjured up the direst possible consequences for Gerald should his guilt be brought home to him. For there was only his own word to show that his deed had not been willfully committed, out of revenge for the insults he had formerly received from the late squire.

Yes, knowing the girl's apprehensions—to which he had but added new grounds in his fabricated story of the discovery of the handkerchief and letter, found almost on the fatal spot—and fully cognizant of her love for Gerald, he felt convinced that she could find no way of escape from his demands. She was in the toils, a captive, doomed to submit to his will.

tions of love were not mere mock heroics, nor specimens of consummate acting, proofs of the skill of a dissembler, gaudy tinsel used to trick out a sham love and give it the semblance of genuineness and sincerity.

No, he had indeed spoken the truth in saying that almost from the first Maude had won his heart. And she had done that although, as he had shown in his confession to his cousin, Holmes, self-interest had actuated him in his coming forward to act the part of lover. He had always admired her, but at first this same self-interest had prevented his coming forward, when, however, by the discovery of her uncle's wealth, her prospects seemed altogether different from what he thought them—the case was altogether different—and he had allowed himself to yield to his real feeling for Maude. Constant intercourse with her, the almost daily contemplation of her charms, an intimate knowledge of her real character—all this had gradually enthralled him. Passion, if not love, had overpowered him and had become the dominant factor in his life. To win the girl he would have sacrificed everything he held most dear.

It is not easy to stir the depths of natures like Crossland—calm, cold and apparently passionless; but a feeling once aroused and allowed ample scope for development grows with terrific force and becomes appalling in its intensity and power. During long years dormant, quiescent, and perchance giving no sign of its existence, or even possibility, within the soul, it has been gathering strength and material for a rapid increase when some external touch awakes it from its long-continued torpor. Maude was the first woman who had ever evoked in Crossland's heart the feeling of love. That feeling had

Again Maude passed a sleepless night. She could not banish from her mind the scene of the past day, nor forget that she stood on the threshold of the great crisis of her life. Her life? Alas! not hers alone. Another's welfare depended upon the decision which to-morrow she would have to make.

Vainly she cast about for some means of escape. For she must save Gerald. Yes, that must come first. But how? Ah, if only Gerald had been perfectly frank with her! If he had fully trusted her with the knowledge of his whereabouts she might now have disclosed to him the treachery and baseness of the man who pretended to be his friend. And Gerald might now be fleeing hundreds of miles away, where he might live in security and peace. And she, too, would have been safe!

But she was powerless to send him one word.

No, there seemed but one way of saving him. She must yield to Crossland's wishes; give herself to him who had become her master. Save Gerald by the sacrifice of herself.

"And after all," thought the poor girl, as a sense of the utter dreariness of her life came over her, "what did it matter how or where that life was passed? Since she and Eustace had parted forever, happiness could never be her lot." She had dreamed her dream; the awakening had come, bitter, stern and devoid of hope.

Henceforth she must live on a dreary existence, cheered only by the consolation that in her path of self-sacrifice she had humbly followed the footsteps of One, Who, to save others, could not save Himself.

Yes, she would save Gerald; and, moreover, save Eustace the bitter pain of knowing that her brother had

The next morning she sent Crossland a note containing these words:

"It must be as you desire.

M. H."

An hour later she received from him a parcel. Too well she knew what it contained. Shuddering, with nervous, trembling fingers, she opened it and took out the detached pieces of Gerald's gun and carefully placed them in his gun-case. There were not tell-tale spots of rust or mud upon it; she noticed that with satisfaction.

The other proofs of Gerald's guilt, as she imagined them—a pocket-handkerchief and an old note addressed to Gerald, which the latter had carelessly left one day on Crossland's table—were speedily consumed by the flames. Then she breathed more freely.

Crossland lost no time in coming to ask Mrs. Hartley's consent to his engagement with her daughter. For that same afternoon he came over to Ivy Cottage.

Mrs. Hartley could scarcely conceal her astonishment at hearing his proposal. She had slowly come to the conclusion that there was an attachment between Eustace Ingham and Maude. That belief still existed, although Eustace had left Marburn without formally declaring himself. But what could she do? She couldn't very well dismiss one suitor by hinting that she had been expecting a similar proposal from another. It was plain that his mission to her had been sanctioned by Maude herself. It seemed, therefore, also plain that Maude no longer cared for Eustace, or that he no longer cared for her. At any rate Maude was old enough to know her own mind. And as Mr. Crossland was in every way eligible for a son-in-law she had no valid reason

for withholding her consent—a consent which the lover asked for and received in a very calm, matter-of-fact way, thus leading her to form the conclusion, erroneous as far as he was concerned, that the two were going to be engaged, or possibly married, before they had been sweethearts. For that was how she expressed it, with a feeling of disappointment. Because, matter-of-fact as she was, she, like every other woman, liked a little romance.

Maude received the congratulations and good wishes of her family very quietly, giving them no encouragement to ask for her confidence. Indeed there was something in her manner which effectually checked all comment or expression of opinion upon her choice.

Grace, indeed, attempted to regain the confidence which, for some time back, she was painfully aware Maude had withheld from her. And the partial estrangement had caused the elder sister intense sorrow, especially as she could not help seeing that Maude's usually cheerful manner and happy looks had completely gone. She looked pale, thin, worn and miserable.

One evening, when they went upstairs to bed, Grace felt as if she could bear it no longer, and so going across to her sister's little room, she entered and, throwing her arm round her waist, whispered, gently: "Maude dearest, are you quite sure you are doing right?"

"Yes—quite—quite right," replied the younger girl, hurriedly, although the shudder which passed over her seemed to give the direct lie to her words.

"I thought, dearest, nay, I hoped that—that things would have been so different," stammered Grace, somewhat incoherently, looking wistfully into Maude's face.

"Did you, Grace?" she replied, with assumed cheerfulness; "don't you know that thoughts and wishes often go by contraries? Yours, dearest, in regard to your engagement are the happy, happy exception that serves to prove the rule," and she affectionately kissed her sister's blushing cheek.

"But your own wishes, Maude?" questioned Grace, anxiously.

"My own wishes, dearest? My own wishes are that you may always be as happy as you look, and—deserve to be," rejoined Maude, evasively, as she turned away, plainly anxious to avoid further interrogations.

Grace made no further attempt to force her confidence.

"You mustn't expect me to congratulate you, Maude," cried Uncle Jack, bluntly, the first time he met his niece after hearing of her engagement. "No, no, you've chosen the wrong man for that."

"I don't ask for any one's congratulations, uncle," replied Maude, quietly, lifting her eyes with sorrowful reproach to his.

"Don't you, child? That sounds bad, very bad," and he shook his head. "But tell me this," he went on, "are you going to marry Mr. Crossland of your own free will?"

"Isn't this a free country, uncle?" replied Maude, playfully. "Do you really think my mother would try to force my inclinations?"

"Well, I should hope not," he said, in a tone of great dissatisfaction. "I don't mean to say you're afraid of being locked up, or starved, or for that matter being in any way ill used if you refuse to carry out this engagement; but there are other ways of compulsion."

"What I am doing I am doing entirely by my own

free will," hastily replied Maude. "Mother herself was a little surprised when she heard the news."

"Then that makes matters all the worse!" cried he, in angry astonishment. "To play fast and loose with one man, and then chuck him overboard at the last moment for another, of your own free will! That's what I can't understand; especially when one of the men is Mr. Crossland."

"You seem to forget, Uncle Jack," replied Maude, with quiet dignity, "that you are speaking of my future husband."

"Well, perhaps I did, child, perhaps I did—but more's the pity. I say—more's the pity!" and he thumped the floor of the sitting-room with his stick.

"I didn't think you would turn against me, uncle," said Maude, reproachfully, her eyes filling with tears.

"Turn against you, my dear," hastily replied Uncle Jack, conscience-smitten at seeing her distress. "Why, you might marry—you might marry, well, any one, if I thought he would make you happy."

"Then, uncle, dear," pleaded Maude, throwing her arms round his neck, "believe that my marriage will be all right and don't worry yourself, and—and me by such talk as this."

"Well, Maude, my dear, if you put it so I have no more to say," he rejoined, ruefully. "But mind this, if you find you have made a mistake don't hesitate to say so, and I'll back you out in it. I'll back you out, remember that."

Maude kissed him, and he went away very thoughtful. The idea that any girl who had been loved by Eustace Ingham could love such a man as Crossland seemed to him incredible.

Was it possible that Maude was in Crossland's power? He remembered how great had been her distress when, on hearing the rumors about Gerald having shot the late squire which were afloat, he went to her and questioned her about his whereabouts on the night when the deed was done. How she begged him to ask her no more questions! Was it possible she believed her brother to be guilty? Was she trying to screen him? Was this how she had got into Crossland's power? He, if any one, would know about Gerald's doings on that fatal night, for every one had supposed Gerald was with him all the next day. Was poor Maude trying to buy his silence—with herself? Was he using Gerald's guilt, or what the girl imagined to be his guilt, as a lever to make her consent to his wishes?

Uncle Jack had a shrewd head upon his shoulders, and thus he suspected pretty nearly the truth. And he was confident that Gerald was innocent, even though there might be much circumstantial evidence against him. Gerald had many faults: he had been an idle ne'er-do-well, living upon his mother and sisters, disdaining to do an honest man's work in the world, and despising the "poor relation" who, after being tossed about the world, had come to make his home near them; but, for all that, Uncle Jack knew that he was incapable of lifting up his hand against the poor old squire.

It was cowardly of him to run away, but then things looked black against him, after his having threatened the deceased; and moral courage was not his forte.

But he had been severely punished for his faults, and Maude was suffering; she was on the point of paying dearly for his sins. Maude must be saved.

And apparently a bad man's wicked schemes were

prospering; and that was a thing which Uncle Jack's righteous soul abhorred.

Long he pondered over the matter, and then he telegraphed to London for a private detective.

In a very short time indeed an experienced officer of the name of Birkin was sent down in answer to his request.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MR. BIRKIN MAKES DISCOVERIES.

"A snapper-up of unconsidered trifles."

—SHAKESPEARE.

As a rule the inhabitants of Marburn did not welcome strangers with open arms. They rather prided themselves on being "clannish"; some folks called them "stand-offish." Probably, however, the fact that on some occasions their confidence had been abused might have rendered them a trifle suspicious. Strangers of good appearance, too, had come to Marburn and gone leaving debts behind them. And other worse things than that had happened.

And so when Mr. Birkin came to stay for a while, at the village inn, he was at first looked upon with some coldness; but this did not last long, for soon, very soon, he became quite popular. Nor was this solely because he was an outspoken man, one who, to use his own words, hated mysteries. As a proof of this, within only one short

week every man, woman and child in Marburn were acquainted with his whole history, as they thought it. They could all have told you that Mr. Birkin was a butler, just then out of a place, enjoying himself on a legacy kindly left him by a master whom he had long and faithfully served. But Mr. Birkin had better credentials than mere statements on his own part, or even letters of introduction on the part of others. He had plenty of money, and was not averse to spending it freely. Ready money was his motto, bills were his aversion. So he said, and his actions gave due stability and confirmation to his words. Moreover, within reasonable limits, Mr. Birkin was quite prepared to do his part in helping to quench the perennial thirst which afflicted many of the good people at Marburn. And then, he was never weary of listening to the history of the Marburnites, past and present. Everything concerning them seemed to interest him. Naturally, he soon heard about Squire Ingham's death, down to the very slightest details, including, of course, although this was in the strictest confidence, the very names of the actual perpetrators of the crime. The very *names*. For while some inclined to the belief that Gerald Hartley was the guilty one, others as strongly insisted that the notorious poacher Sikes was the real culprit. The main cause of suspicion in each case seemed to be the fact that both had been seen out late on the night of the unfortunate man's death, and that both had disappeared the next day. The latter was a most damning fact. Birkin made up his mind to cultivate the acquaintance of Mr. Sikes. It was no extremely difficult task to find out his present abode. Money is the golden key which unlocks many a closed door, and Mr. Sikes had left friends behind who

would sell him any time for a five-pound note. So Mr. Birkin was informed; and as a matter of fact it cost him less than that to find out Sikes's address. For the credit of human nature it must be assumed that it was understood that he had no particularly vital reason for remaining undiscovered.

It seemed that he was enjoying the breezes of Brighton, in the society of relations, poor but honest fishermen.

Birkin paid a visit to Brighton, and in due time made the acquaintance of Mr. Sikes. This was no difficult matter, for he had been brought up, as it were, on the beach, and before migrating to Marburn had plied the trade of boatman, an occupation to which he always resorted when too much notoriety at Marburn made a change of residence desirable. Many a sail did Birkin enjoy in the society of the ex-poacher; many a confidential chat did they have together. Sikes, except in the society of a policeman, was not at all averse to recounting his sporting expeditions. Birkin very quickly came to the conclusion that Sikes was entirely innocent of all complicity in Squire Ingham's murder. His acquaintance with the criminal classes was extensive; he had enjoyed ample opportunities for observing their ways, both before, during and after arrest. That indefinable something—a mixture of terror, despair, cunning, nervous apprehension, and, perhaps, bravado—which distinguishes most criminals was entirely absent in Sikes's face. Even when suddenly startled he gave no sign of being in fear of arrest.

One day, in a burst of confidence, Birkin stated that he had been enjoying the pleasures of country life at Marburn.

"Marburn!" cried Sikes, "why, bless 'ee, I come from Marburn; lived there a many years."

"And what made you leave Marburn, Sikes?"

"Too fond o' sport, sir. Too fond o' sport!" replied he, with a broad grin on his face.

"I suppose you heard of Squire Ingham's death?" said Birkin, looking intently at him.

"I did, sir; and do you know he was shot the very night before I come away from Marburn; and more than that, sir, I was out after a little sport not far from the hidetical spot where he was shot. There, sir, think o' that. It's wot I calls a hextraordinary coincidence, as they says in the papers."

"And weren't you afraid of being suspected? I mean your running away the next day might have looked suspicious."

"Why, bless 'ee, sir," replied Sikes, "if they'd suspected me one small moment I'd been in quod long ago; but I 'adn't no call to be afeard, and I'll tell 'ee why. Jes you listen to me. That there night was the rummiest and the fullest o' the most curious coincidences I ever seed. You heerd oz Mr. Crossland when you was at Marburn? Yes, of course you did. Well, I was jes passing his 'ouse on my way 'ome, in the middle o' the night, mind ye, when out he jumps from behind an 'edge and collars me, and wuss luck, as I thought, my rabbits and fesans and likewise my gun. Terrible bad luck that be, to be sewer, I thinks to mysel', as I goes 'ome empty-handed. But was it?" he asked, triumphantly. "Jes listen to me again. I 'adn't gone far when the village bobby comes up and collars me."

"'Ullo, Mr. Sikes,' says he, 'wot's your little game prowlin' about at this time o' night? Hear that? The

clock's strikin' 'alf-past three. You ain't up to no good. Let me see wot you're a-carrying 'ome.' Search number two; an' I a'most bust wi' larfen to think 'ow that there bobby was sold!"

"You had some narrow escapes that night, Sikes," said Birkin, laughing, "Mr. Crossland saved you from the policeman, and the policeman saved you from being suspected of murder."

"Ah, worn't I in luck just? For mind you, other people knowed I was out that night! But wot I says is this, 'taint everybody as can peerjuce a bobby to give him a nalibi."

Birkin, in the course of further conversation with Sikes, gleamed other items of information about the night of the 18th of November—items interesting in themselves and extremely useful from his point of view as detective. Before leaving Brighton, Birkin found it necessary to inform Sikes of his real occupation and the object with which he had been making his late inquiries. He could afford to show a little confidence then, as Sikes showed no resentment at having been "taken in," as he termed it; he had certainly been well paid for the information he had given.

"I suppose you wouldn't mind coming back to Marburn?" suggested Birkin, just before he took leave of him, "for a consideration, of course," he added.

"No, I'll come back right enough if you'll make it worth my while," said Sikes, laughing. "'Appen Mr. Crossland won't trouble hissself about me now. It's a goodish bit since—that little affair."

Perfectly satisfied with the result of his journey to Brighton, Birkin returned to Marburn, where more remained to be done. But the information derived from

Sikes helped to clear the ground in a wonderful manner. Had Crossland been aware of the extraordinary interest a comparative stranger was taking in his affairs he would no doubt have been considerably astonished. How much more so had he known that the said stranger was intimately acquainted with various matters which he himself regarded as important secrets?

Birkin's crowning stroke, not of skill, for he himself modestly disclaimed all share in the discovery, but of luck, was his being able to trace the whereabouts of Gerald Hartley. It was brought about thus: A rumor began to be whispered about in Marburn that Birkin was a detective from Scotland Yard, who had come down engaged in the task of discovering Squire Ingham's murderer. This report in the first instance came from Sikes, who, in a letter to his relations at Marburn spoke of his interviews with Birkin and the nature of the inquiries the latter was making. Of course all this was in the strictest confidence. It was misplaced confidence; in a few hours the news was all over the place. Brown, Crossland's agent, the man who had tracked Gerald to the barracks at Aldershot, heard it. The result was he sought an interview with Birkin.

"I've called, sir," he began, "about that there reward of a hundred pounds as was offered by the police for the discoverer of Squire Ingham's murderer."

"Yes, and have you discovered who it was?" asked Birkin, giving him a keen glance.

"Yes, sir, I have. Leastways I think so, and more nor that," he added, triumphantly, "I can put my finger on 'im this here hidetical minute."

"Ah, come, that looks like business," replied Birkin,

taking out his note-book. "Now, then, let us have all the particulars."

"Well, the man as done the deed is Mr. Gerald Hartley, lately living at Ivy Cottage in this very village. Now he's a solider in the 16th Lancers, stationed at Aldershot, and he calls himself Henry Barnes. I heard as how you were a detective on this very job," he added, as if in explanation of his visit and communication.

Ignoring the gentle insinuation as to his profession, Mr. Birkin replied: "You're rather late in the day."

"Not too late," cried Brown; "don't say, sir, I ain't the first in the field."

"Oh, you're all right so far," replied Birkin, reassuringly; "I mean you are rather late in finding out all this."

"Well, sir, the fact of the matter is I had my suspicions long ago, but I could not piece things together before. I wasn't able to perjure the witness who saw Mr. Hartley coming away from the spot after doing the deed."

"I see. Well, Mr. Brown, if Mr. Gerald Hartley is proved guilty you'll get the reward right enough. And now I think that is sufficient for the present."

The fact was, Brown had had a quarrel with Crossland, and a desire for revenge had arisen so great that he was prepared to risk everything if only he could indulge it.

Birkin made a journey to Aldershot that day, and, by means of a photograph, was able to verify Brown's assertion that Gerald Hartley was serving as a private under an assumed name in the 16th Lancers.

On his return he had a lengthened and, from a monetary point of view, highly satisfactory interview with John Hartley.

That was his last appearance in Marburn.

CHAPTER XXXII.

COALS OF FIRE.

“ Man is one,
And he hath one great heart. It is thus we feel,
With a gigantic throb athwart the sea,
Each other's rights and wrongs. Thus are we men.
—BAILEY'S *Festus*.

THE day after receiving Birkin's final report Uncle Jack went to London, and from thence, at the end of two days, to Aldershot.

On arriving there he engaged rooms at The County, the most fashionable hotel in the place, ordered dinner for two at seven o'clock, and then sallied forth to the cavalry barracks. There he had a long interview with the colonel of the 16th Royal Dragoons.

Just before he took his leave the colonel rang the bell. “Send for private Henry Barnes,” said he to the servant who answered the summons.

In a few minutes Private Barnes, alias Gerald Hartley, appeared, saluted his colonel and then stood attention, vainly endeavoring to conceal his amazement at finding his uncle in close confab with his chief officer.

“Barnes,” said the colonel, “at your uncle's request, you have leave out of barracks till twelve to-night, and whenever you ask—to-morrow, if you like—furlough for a week. That is all.”

Private Barnes once more saluted and retired.

“Good-by, Colonel Rhodes,” said Hartley, holding out

his hand, "good-by, and many thanks for your kindness."

"Not at all, not at all," replied the colonel, heartily. "Least I could do under the circumstances; but take advice, if the young fellow wants to stop in the regiment, why, let him do so."

In the barrack-yard, Hartley found Gerald waiting for him. "Shake hands, Gerald," he said, holding out his hand, which the young man shook sheepishly enough.

"Now, I want you to come and have some dinner with me at The County. Here, to save time, we'll take a hansom," and he hailed one which was passing the gates.

Gerald mechanically got in after his uncle, and very soon they found themselves in Hartley's private room at The County.

Gerald could hardly keep his eyes off his uncle. Every trace of the "poor relation" had totally disappeared. He was fashionably if plainly dressed. His silver chain and watch had been replaced by others of gold, simple in pattern but costly. But the change was not only in dress. There was a dignity, a sense of power about him which startled Gerald and inspired him with a certain amount of respect, bordering upon awe. Gerald felt actually proud of him. He looked every inch a Hartley. To treat him with disrespect now seemed impossible. The young man even colored a little at the remembrance of his former behavior toward him. A sign of grace, indeed. "Sit down, Gerald," said Hartley, "I want a little talk with you before dinner. We have half an hour yet."

Gerald sat down opposite his uncle, anxiously wondering what he was about to hear. The elder Hartley's manner betokened no evil tidings.

“Let me begin by relieving your mind of a great burden,” said Uncle Jack, after a few moments’ reflection, looking earnestly at his nephew as he did so. “You had nothing to do with causing the death of Squire Ingham.”

“What!” exclaimed Gerald, starting from his chair; “say that again. *I* had nothing to do with—” here his faltering tongue failed him, he could only gaze at his uncle in speechless wonder.

“No, I repeat it. You had nothing to do with causing the death of Squire Ingham. For, mark you, he was shot just half an hour after you had reached Marburn village on your way home.”

Gerald sank back into his chair, covering his face with his hands, while the tears, happy tears of relief, rolled down his cheek. Oh, what a burden had gone from his heart! His hands were innocent of blood.

There was a suspicious redness about Uncle Jack’s eyes as he sat looking at his nephew. It was evident he was not astonished at these signs of emotion on Gerald’s part.

Presently the latter grew calmer.

“But, Uncle Jack,” he said, looking at his uncle with a slightly incredulous air, “I did—did shoot somebody.”

“You did,” the other replied, quietly; “you shot Bill Sikes, who was out poaching in Marden Spinney. It was his cry you heard. It was Sikes you evidently mistook for a keeper in your hasty flight. Bill, too, was escaping from an imaginary keeper, and did not recognize or even see you till you both got near Marden Spinney—Mr. Crossland’s house. But where your unfortunate shot went to matters but little. The point is this. You could not have wounded Squire Ingham. For listen.

Bill Sikes was stopped by the village policeman in Marburn Street at half-past three by the clock. You were a minute or two before him. Mr. Ingham did not leave the Hall till half-past three, and his watch stopped, injured by shot, exactly at four o'clock."

For some time Gerald could not speak, so deep was his emotion at finding that the proof of his innocence was thus happily supplied. "But who," he said, at length—"who has taken the trouble to find out all this? To whom am I indebted for this great kindness?"

"To one who is still under an obligation to your father, my boy," said the other, kindly, "and who seeks to repay it in a small measure by doing what he can for Gerald Hartley's children. He sent to London for a private detective who, though unable to find out who was the actual murderer, found out quite enough to clear you from suspicion. Doubtless the squire was shot by one of the many poachers who had troubled him so much of late."

The younger and living Gerald looked at him with deep gratitude. He knew now who was the benefactor to whom he owed so much and who had so frequently done kindnesses to himself and his family. The despised "poor relation," the man whom he had allowed to risk drowning in the Lent rather than to say a few words to prevent it. The man to whom he had been so often rude and unkind. He it was who had spent money and trouble and time in trying to free him from the horrible burden of suspicion and the weight of a terrible trial.

"Forgive me," he faltered, holding out his hand and speaking humbly, "forgive me, uncle."

"My dear fellow, of course I do. I'm sure you're awfully sorry about it all, and so am I. We'll say noth-

ing more about it. Eh, what's that? Accident in the Lent. No, don't say you might have prevented it and didn't! I couldn't have believed it of you, I couldn't, indeed. In all the troublesome—that is, I mean the continued—investigation as to your innocence in this matter I have said to myself about you: 'Gerald wouldn't have hurt a fly. He had his faults, but to lift up a finger against any one, or cause another a moment's bodily pain—not he, a thousand times no.' I was sure of that. And I getting old, too, and having twinges of rheumatism ever since that struggle in the Lent! Oh, Gerald!"

"I'm awfully ashamed," said Gerald, holding his head down. "I'm sure you can never forgive me. I don't deserve to be forgiven."

"Ah, but we must forgive," said Uncle Jack, "even as we'd be forgiven. So we won't think any more about it, my boy; that, too, shall be forgotten by one to whom your father was so very, very good."

"Oh, thank you, uncle," said Gerald, penitently; "I shall never forget it, never," and the tears again sprung to his eyes and rolled down his cheeks.

"Gerald," said his uncle, after a little time, "you are not aware, I suppose, that things have not been going quite smoothly among your friends. Maude has refused poor Ingham, and he has gone abroad—to Egypt, I think—in great distress of mind."

"Maude refused to marry Ingham!" exclaimed Gerald. "Why, I'm sure she used to care for him, even I could see that."

"I should think you knew as much as any one what was the state of her mind when you were at home, so, perhaps, you can form some idea of her reasons for say-

ing no to that nice young fellow?" and Uncle Jack looked inquiringly at his nephew.

Gerald remained buried in thought for a few minutes. "I perhaps might suggest one possible reason which led her to say no," he said, at last, in very low tones. "Thinking that I had—wounded—been the cause of his father's death—she might have shrunk from—from—" but he could not stammer out another word. He was horrified at discovering how heavily the results of his own actions had fallen upon others—including his own best-beloved sister, too.

"You are not very clear, Gerald, but I think I understand what you want to say. You—albeit unwittingly—had raised an insurmountable barrier between Eustace Ingham and herself? Well, that is the conclusion I have come to. She herself refused to give me any explanation of her conduct. Her unwillingness to do so was quite natural. She was shielding you."

"Poor Maude," sighed Gerald, "how terribly she must have suffered!"

"Well, my boy, I hope you will have abundant opportunities in the future of making it up to her," said his uncle, kindly. "But I haven't quite finished yet," he added. "Do you know she is engaged to Crossland?"

"Engaged to Crossland?" cried Gerald, springing to his feet. "No, that is impossible!" and he began to pace the room with hasty steps, carried away by the excitement of his feelings. The idea of Maude's engagement to Crossland was monstrous, incredible.

"Impossible? Well, I'm afraid the impossibility of the matter exists rather in your own mind than the thing itself; impossible or not, it is a fact."

Gerald, who was standing by his chair at that instant,

sank back into it in an attitude of despair. Was this another awful result of that fatal night's adventures?

"This is terrible," he groaned. "She can't love Crossland."

"Not love him? Then why promise to become his wife?" and once again his uncle gave him a searching glance.

Gerald shook his head. He could attempt to give no explanation of this second extraordinary step on Maude's part. The idea that she was about to sacrifice herself for his sake would have been the last to occur to him. Not because he would have deemed her incapable of such devotion, but rather because he would not have thought Crossland could have been base enough to demand such a sacrifice on her part. No, for Gerald, Maude's conduct was an insoluble mystery.

"I can't even suggest why she is going to marry him," was all he could say in answer to his uncle's inquiry.

"Can't you? Then let me suggest a possible reason? Let us suppose she is sacrificing herself to save you."

"Save me, uncle? What do you mean?" cried Gerald, in amazement, totally unable to grasp the force of his uncle's words.

"Be patient and be calm, Gerald," said his uncle, quietly. "Let me finish. Suppose Crossland has threatened to denounce you as Squire Ingham's murderer unless she consents to marry him?"

"But that is too monstrous for belief," and Gerald once more sprung to his feet, horror-struck at his uncle's suggestion.

"Let us hope it is. Let us hope, for his sake, that such baseness is incredible."

"It is—it must be! Why, from what you have told

me he must have known that I was two miles away from Marden Spinney when the squire was shot."

"Quite so. He must have known that; but, you see, *you* didn't even know it, and therefore it is quite possible that Maude didn't. Nay, I am convinced she did not *know* that fact."

"And he pretended to be my friend!" cried Gerald, aghast. "What a double-faced, heartless scoundrel! I should like to horsewhip him," and the young man's eyes flashed with rage.

"Gerald," said his uncle, impressively, "you must be guided entirely by me. Remember, as yet we have no positive proof of Crossland's base treachery; suspicions count for little. For your sister's sake we must avoid anything like a public scandal. There is one way by which we can give both Maude and Crossland an opportunity of retiring from a false position, if, as I believe, this engagement is not founded upon mutual respect and love. We must publicly prove your innocence of all share in Squire Ingham's death. And indeed, leaving those two out of the question, that proof *must* be made publicly. There are rumors abroad which point to you as the guilty one. Those rumors must in the fullest daylight be shown to have no foundation."

"I will agree to any plan," exclaimed Gerald, eagerly.

"Stop a moment," said his uncle; "don't be so impetuous in binding yourself to unknown conditions."

"The plan—yes, the only plan I can suggest will cause you suffering and shame; you will not escape public disgrace, nor will you escape some punishment, what it may be I cannot say. Now consider, are you prepared to make this sacrifice?"

"Uncle Jack," replied Gerald, earnestly, "for Maude's

sake I will suffer anything. See how much she has suffered on my account already."

"Very well, my boy, I am pleased to hear you speak like that. You couldn't do too much for her sake. Ay, and more than that, leaving her aside, you ought to suffer for your wrongdoing. Now, I don't want to seem harsh or unkind, but I must speak out straight. Just consider how much suffering your wrongdoing—I allude, of course, to your poaching—has inflicted upon your friends. Your mother and sisters, Eustace Ingham and myself, all of us have been more or less the victims to a greater or less extent of your unlawful actions. Nay, to go further back, your false pride, disgust of honest work and selfishness are the original causes of all this misery that has come upon yourself and others."

It was plain from the patient way in which Gerald listened to his uncle that his pride was broken. A great deal of the old leaven formerly working in his character was gone. He had been through the furnace and had come out considerably refined and purified.

His silence and the tears which still slowly welled down his cheeks were mute but eloquent signs of grace, which were viewed by Uncle Jack with intense satisfaction.

"My lad," he said, looking at him with kindly interest, while a suspicious huskiness came into his voice, "the good old Book says: 'Be sure your sin will find you out.' Which, I take it, means that, discovered or not, it will bring trouble to you if not to others. You are finding that out by bitter experience. Well, we can't undo the past, but we must try to obviate some of the consequences of your action, so far, at least, as they concern

others. As I said, that will entail additional suffering on you."

"I will do anything to make Maude happy again," murmured Gerald, looking up earnestly at his uncle.

"Then listen to me," and Uncle Jack proceeded to lay before him certain plans which he had made in furtherance of the object he had in view.

When he had finished, much to his satisfaction Gerald promised his hearty co-operation in carrying out all of them.

The next morning the young man obtained his furlough from the colonel, and in the afternoon accompanied his uncle to London.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A SURPRISING REVELATION.

"And he who sees the future sure,
The baffling present may endure;
And bless, meanwhile, the unseen Hand that leads
The heart's desires beyond the halting step of deeds."
—J. G. WHITTIER.

AS GERALD and Uncle Jack were at breakfast in a private room at the Charing Cross Hotel, the following morning, the latter observed: "I thought it better to send for Maude to come up to town and meet you here. She will arrive about two o'clock."

"How good of you!" cried Gerald, gratefully.

"Well, I thought that there would be so much to ex-

plain, and naturally she will be a little overcome, and—and, well, you can more easily have an explanation with her here. But don't attempt to force her confidence, and above all make no allusion to her engagement with Crossland. Leave that to me. I shall be able to judge by her conduct, after hearing of your innocence, if I am correct in my surmises about her engagement. At least I hope so. In any case I shall take it upon me to unfold to her my conjectures on the subject. Now, if you quite understand what I wish you to do in the matter, of making known your innocence, I think we had better have a little talk about your future. I don't think serving in the ranks has done you any harm, by the way. But there may be another opening found for you, should you prefer to leave the army," and he looked significantly at Gerald.

The young man knew all that was implied in the few simple words—his uncle was willing to help him in his choice of a profession, and was, moreover, fully able to do so most substantially. It had dawned upon him long ere this that the "poor relation" was but a creature of imagination.

But, without a moment's hesitation, he replied: "Thank you, uncle, but I would rather stay where I am. There are rumors of active service in Egypt; if so, I may have a chance of getting a commission. At any rate I'll risk it."

"Bravo, Gerald, spoken like a man!" cried Uncle Jack, heartily. "I think the army has done you good in many ways."

"Well, perhaps it has," replied Gerald, somewhat ruefully. "It's the place to knock a little conceit out of you. And you can't easily have your own way."

“And I’m afraid they don’t consult your feelings too much. Eh?”

“No; but they are not at all backward in expressing their own, if you are not exactly up to the mark in everything. And they are all the same from the colonel down to the newest corporal.”

“But in spite of all these little drawbacks you decide upon remaining where you are?”

“Yes, certainly. But I don’t know how the mater will like it?”

“Oh, leave that to me. I’ll make it right with her,” cried his uncle.

And then he went out to call on his cousin, Lord Granton, without, however, thinking it necessary to mention his destination to his nephew.

Lord Granton being at home and disengaged, his cousin had the satisfaction of giving him a little of the plain-speaking, replete with common sense, which characterized his usual conversation. The interview proved more or less satisfactory to the ex-American, who felt when it was over that he had done his duty by Lord Granton, at all events. What Lord Granton thought of it was another matter.

At a quarter to two Maude was met at Charing Cross Station by her uncle, who took her in a hansom to his hotel, from which he had sent Gerald for an hour’s walk.

The girl was considerably startled at the change in her uncle’s appearance and manner. And her half-formed suspicions concerning his real position were strengthened by finding he was staying at the Charing Cross Hotel. That was hardly compatible with the pocket

of a poor man. However, she kept her astonishment to herself.

After she had lunched in his private sitting-room Uncle Jack left her, saying he had a little business to see after.

Maude was not left alone long; her uncle soon returned, looking very mysterious and happy.

"Maude," he said, "I have brought some one to see you."

The girl looked eagerly toward the door.

A tall figure in a scarlet coat stood there.

The next moment she was in Gerald's arms. Uncle Jack left them alone.

"How well you look, Gerald," she cried, looking up admiringly into his face, "and — and — happy," she added.

"I am happy, Maude, love," he replied, eagerly; "and so I ought to be, for do you know I never touched poor Squire Ingham on that dreadful night before I left home."

"You never shot him! You are innocent! Oh, thank God for that," and Maude threw herself on his breast, while tears, happy tears of joy and relief, flowed down her cheeks.

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But it was quite plain to Uncle Jack, when he joined them, that even the glad news of Gerald's innocence and the pleasure of being with him once more did not render the girl perfectly happy. The burden of sorrow was not all rolled away. Her engagement with Crossland was still weighing heavily upon her mind. Even Gerald—

and brothers are not as a rule the most observant of their sisters' moods and looks—could plainly see that.

Before the girl returned to Marburn she and her uncle had a long conversation together. There were many things to discuss.

“Maude,” began Uncle Jack, “I think you will readily understand why I wanted you to be the first to see Gerald, yes, even before his mother. You alone knew the principal reason why he left home; you had to hear alone what you considered a terrible secret, it was only right that you should be the first to hear from his lips the real truth.”

“The happy truth, which we have to thank you for finding out, uncle, dear,” cried Maude, joyously, looking at him with great affection. “How shall we ever be able to repay you for all you have done?”

“There, child, that will do,” replied her uncle, hastily, “don’t begin to talk nonsense. Besides, I haven’t finished all I meant to say,” and he looked earnestly at her. “There is another reason why you should be the first to hear the good news of Gerald’s innocence; if I am not mistaken, it concerns you more directly than any one else.”

Maude looked down in confusion and turned deathly pale, but made no attempt to repel the suggestion contained in the words.

“Do you know,” he went on, “your behavior during the last few months startled me extremely. You loved Eustace Ingham, and yet you sent him away. You did not love Frank Crossland, and yet you promised to marry him. Now, what are the solutions of these two mysteries?”

Maude made no reply. But the heaving of her bosom and the quivering of her lips betrayed the presence of a deep emotion within her heart.

"As soon as ever I heard the rumor connecting Gerald's name with the murder of Squire Ingham," went on her uncle, "the key to the riddle was easy to find. You couldn't marry Eustace Ingham believing that Gerald was guilty of having committed such a terrible crime. Now, Maude, tell me truthfully, am I not right?" and he looked inquiringly at the girl.

"Yes, yes, of course; that was the reason I refused Mr. Ingham," murmured Maude, faintly, her eyes filling with tears at the thought of her lost love.

"Very well, and now for the explanation of the other enigma. You were forced into this engagement with Mr. Crossland. Of course I don't pretend to understand the whole history of the transaction, but Gerald's safety had something to do with it, that I am sure of," and his voice had a ring of triumph in it as he looked once more inquiringly at Maude.

But she broke down completely. Heavy sobs choked her utterance for a few moments. Then, rising from her chair, she threw herself into her uncle's arms, gasping, in spasmodic sentences: "Yes, I did—did it, to save Gerald—oh, if I could only get free from my promise—save me, uncle, from this hateful marriage."

"Listen to me, my dear," said her uncle, soothingly. "A promise extorted from you under such circumstances only deserves to be broken! You were hardly a free agent. You gave it under pressure of a cruel threat. It was a promise he had no right to ask in that way."

"And you really think, uncle, dear, that I am not

bound to carry it out?" cried Maude, a gleam of hope coming into her eyes.

"Keep it, my dear? Not a bit of it! Besides, it was obtained under false pretenses. He pretended he was able to save Gerald from a dreadful danger. That danger never existed at all. He was a liar and a scoundrel when he wrung your consent to an engagement."

"Oh, thank heavens that I am once more free!" cried Maude, fervently, as she sank trembling into her chair, while the tears of happy relief coursed down her cheeks.

After some little time, when she was calmer, Uncle Jack told her his scheme for establishing Gerald's innocence in the minds of all those who suspected him of having caused Squire Ingham's death. And then they talked about the expediency of taking the Hartleys abroad for a time while it was carried out. He imagined, too, that change of air and scene would do them all good, and especially Maude.

"And now, perhaps," he went on to say, when they had arranged these and sundry other matters to the girl's satisfaction, "I ought to make a little explanation. Of course you will have gathered that I have been living among you under what you may call false pretenses. Without positively asserting the fact in so many words, I have certainly been acting down at Marburn as a man of small means. Why? you may ask. Well, in the first instance it was merely a matter of impulse. I could see you looked on me as a poor relation when first I came, and the idea occurred to me to keep up the illusion by my style of living and simplicity of habits. Perhaps I thought I should feel freer and less restrained in speech and action if I mixed with you on

the same level as regarded means; and perhaps, as the poor relation, learn to know more of you than a rich one might have the opportunity to do. I must confess I didn't feel altogether comfortable in assuming a position to which I had no right. It seemed rather like playing the spy. But, having begun, I determined to go on for some time in my new character.

"Sometimes, especially when I saw you and Grace bravely toiling on with your needles, my resolution almost broke down. And many a time within the last few weeks I have bitterly regretted taking such a step. I *might* have prevented a great deal of unmerited suffering on the part of the weak and innocent. But we can't always see the consequences of our actions. Even the best intentions may end disastrously. A great deal of what I saw of the inner life at Ivy Cottage gave me intense satisfaction. I noticed how bravely Jack threw himself into the breach, and, giving up for the time his idea of being an artist, eagerly took up the first work that he could get. And, as I have said, I noticed how hard you and Grace worked and did what you could to keep the house going. Then came Grace's trial. And I saw how patiently she and George waived their own feelings for a time out of consideration for others—how pleased the new owner of Marburn would feel to know he had made two young people happy by appointing George as his agent!" and he looked at Maude with a merry twinkle in his eye. "I hope George won't disappoint his confidence."

Then the truth dawned upon Maude. "*Why* you are the new owner of Marburn Hall," she exclaimed, rapturously. "What a scheming match-maker you are, uncle! But how delightful of you! I must give you

Grace's thanks in this way," and she almost smothered him with her embraces.

"If Grace is half as demonstrative in her thank-offerings I shall barely escape with my life," cried Uncle Jack, plaintively, escaping at length from her arms. "Is my tie quite straight again? I am sure my hair must be in a dreadful state of confusion."

"Oh, 'uncle, how vain you are!" cried Maude, merrily. "Your hair—what there is of it—is in beautiful order."

"Then I can proceed in comfort. As for you, my love," he went on, at length, looking affectionately at her, "what shall I say of your *great* sacrifice?"

"Oh, please don't say anything, uncle, dear," entreated Maude, faintly.

"I must say this, my dear: Gerald will never forget it. I feel convinced that in the future he will try and be a man worthy of the sister who could do so much for him. His very determination to remain in the ranks and try and win a commission shows that he is altered for the better. Yes, he is developing quite a new character. And you know, dear, character is everything, and to learn to be noble, generous and unselfish is worth all the money and rank in the world."

"It is," said Maude, earnestly, with tears in her lovely eyes.

"And now just one little word about *your own future*, my dear. You have been brave and patient when others were concerned. Keep a good heart. Even if the clouds seem to hang a little dark and thick now over your own life, perhaps we shall see the silver lining shining through them by and by," and he tenderly kissed her blushing cheek.

She knew perfectly well what he meant, and his words strengthened the secret hope in her heart.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MAUDE'S GOOD NEWS.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."
—ST. JAMES.

WHEN Maude reached Ivy Cottage, on her return from London the next day, Grace happened to be in the little garden.

"Why, Maude," she exclaimed, as the fly drove off again, "what a reckless girl you have grown in a few hours! A fly all to yourself! Have you found a fortune in London?"

"Well, no," replied Maude, with a smile, "I haven't exactly found one, but—" then she paused; the good news must be told when they were all present.

"But what, Maude?" asked Grace, in a tone of surprise, seeing her hesitation.

"Oh, you mustn't ask any questions now. Wait till the others are here."

"Well, I shan't have to wait long. Jack has come home early; and we are just going to have tea."

"Then I'll go straight off and change my things." And Maude tripped upstairs to her little room with something of her old gayety.

"Why, Maude, how well and—yes, how well-satisfied you look!" exclaimed Jack, as he gave her a kiss of welcome when she entered the dining-room, where they were all sitting down to tea. "Doesn't she, mother?"

"She does look better than she did when she went. London seems to have agreed with her, and she certainly seems very happy, judging by her appearance."

"Oh, perhaps Uncle Jack took her to the Crystal Palace for a treat, or perhaps the British Museum," cried Jack.

"British Museum — Crystal Palace, indeed!" indignantly cried Maude. "If you think a visit to either of those places would make me excited — well, all I can say is, you don't deserve to hear the news—good news, too, I've brought back with me."

"There, Jack, that's one for you!" cried Grace, gayly. "Perhaps, now, you will control your tongue. But do make haste, Maude; I'm all in a quiver with eagerness and excitement."

"Quick, child, let's have your budget. Now mind, don't stop till we've heard everything," said Mrs. Hartley.

"Wouldn't you rather wait, mother, till you've had your tea?" said Maude, demurely. "I don't want to spoil your appetite."

"I'll risk that, my dear, if it's really good news you have to give us; so don't tantalize us any longer," replied Mrs. Hartley.

"Very well, then. Listen. In the first place I have seen Gerald."

"Seen Gerald!" exclaimed the others in chorus. "Where? Where? What was he doing?"

"Last night at the Charing Cross Hotel, and he was

enjoying a very good dinner. There! that's a model answer for you."

Immediately there followed another string of eager questions.

"No, no," cried Maude, "I really can't attempt to answer all these inquiries. Why, I should never get my tea at all at this rate. Let me just say this, and then no more about Gerald just now: He looks better in health, and is handsomer and happier than I ever saw him before."

"Thank you, my love, for this good news," said Mrs. Hartley, through her tears of gladness, "you have made me very happy."

"Anything else, Maude?" asked Jack, laconically.

"Yes, Uncle Jack wants us all to go up to London in two or three days, if possible. Partly to see Gerald and partly—" then she stopped, feeling amused at their looks of eager curiosity.

"Yes, yes, and partly to do what? Come, Maude, hurry up," cried Jack.

"Well, partly to make preparations for a good long tour on the Continent."

"Hurrah for Uncle Jack!" cried Jack, enthusiastically; "just when my holidays are beginning."

"Oh, I see," said Grace, "it's uncle who has come into the fortune?"

"No, I think he has had it all along," replied Maude, quietly. "Some of us rather jumped at rash conclusions in fancying him the poor relation. Do you know Marburn Hall—in fact, all the Marburn property has been bought by him?"

"Then he is George's mysterious employer?" cried Grace.

"Yes, and I daresay he bought that especial property partly to get George something to do near home."

"Poor, dear John," murmured Mrs. Hartley, "not to tell us anything about his affairs—how strange! But then he was always quite as eccentric as kind-hearted."

"And there's a letter for you, Jack," said Maude, tossing a sealed envelope to her brother. "But uncle said you were not to open it until you were alone."

Jack took the letter and put it in his pocket with some satisfaction and much wonder. What was his good uncle going to do for *him*?

"He's an awfully good fellow," he said, enthusiastically; "I always liked him."

When Maude had given them a little time in which thoroughly to digest all the good news she had brought she directed their minds once more to the proposed excursion abroad, reminding them that the time for preparation was short.

"But you needn't worry about buying any fresh things here," she added, "for uncle wants us to stay a few days in London before we go. And you will be able to rig yourselves out much cheaper there than here. Those are uncle's very words. And here, mother, he has sent you something to do it with." And she held out a check for fifty pounds.

"How awfully kind and thoughtful of uncle!" exclaimed Grace, enthusiastically. "Why, I declare he thinks of everything. How shall we ever be able to thank him enough?"

"Why, by showing him how thoroughly you enjoy yourselves, both in London and abroad, I should say," replied Maude, laughing.

That night Grace followed Maude into her room after they had all gone upstairs.

"I'm glad you've come here, Grace," said the latter, "I have something to say to you."

"Well, I knew there was something more you might say, Maude," returned Grace, quietly, "you didn't quite empty your budget this evening. For instance, I don't exactly see why we are to rush off from Marburn in such a desperate hurry all at once. Merely to see London or Switzerland? No, that is just an excuse for concealing some other reasons."

"Yes—you are quite right, Grace. And now you shall hear the *whole* truth."

Then Maude poured into the ears of her astonished sister the story of Gerald's poaching adventure, the suspicion which had fallen upon him, the real reason of his flight, the motives underlying her engagement with Crossland and the discovery of Gerald's innocence, together with the scheme which her uncle had thought out, whereby Gerald's innocence was to be publicly made known.

"And then you break off your engagement?" said Grace, when she had ended.

"And then I break off my engagement," replied Maude. "To-day is Tuesday. Mr. Crossland comes back on Friday, so he told me. It is to be done immediately on his return. Now, I think, you must see the reason of this hurry to get away from here. We don't want mother to know anything, at least at present, of Gerald's misadventures. But, of course, as soon as ever Gerald's innocence is made known I shall tell her that my engagement is at an end."

"You are a brave girl, Maude," said Grace, looking admiringly at her.

"Oh, I don't know that I have done more than any other girl would have done under the circumstances," replied Maude, quietly. "You would have done just the same, Grace, I am sure."

"Well, I trust I may never be tried in such a way," said Grace, tenderly. "How terribly you must have suffered, and without having any sympathy from any of us."

"Yes, that was a very hard part of it. But there, don't let us speak of *that* past any more. Out of evil good has come, for I think poor Gerald has quite come to himself. If you had but seen how terribly cut up he was on learning *all* the results that flowed from just one of his thoughtless actions. But he is quite changed in almost every way; and, only fancy, he and Uncle Jack are quite good friends now!"

"Ah, dear Uncle Jack," cried Grace, "how much we all owe to him! He has been quite the good angel of the family. But I always liked him, you know."

"Yes; Grace, but then you always try and find something to like in everybody, while some of us try and find things to dislike. I am afraid I did in this case, at first. But I think he has quite forgiven me."

As Grace passed Jack's door, on her way to her own room, he opened it softly and beckoned to her to come in.

"Oh, Gracie, darling," he said, rapturously, "only think, Uncle Jack is a brick and no mistake! What do you think he is going to do for me? No, you will never guess! He has written me the splendidest letter—watched my conduct with approval—and so on—a lot of bosh—

but, he says, Lord Granton is anxious to do something for the family, and as he has a great deal to do with art in different ways it pleases him to offer to pay all my expenses for a couple of years—or more, if necessary—while I study in Paris at *l'Ecole des Beaux Arts*."

"Oh, Jack, how nice, how very nice! Why, you will be an artist yet! How glad I am!"

"Just what I wanted most!" cried Jack. "I am a made man—"

"Yes, but not a made artist yet—"

"But on the way to be one," interrupted Jack. "There's only one least little bit of a drawback," he added, more slowly.

"Why, what can that be?" asked Grace, who could see no drawback anywhere.

"I would rather accept this great favor from Uncle Jack. You see Lord Granton has neglected Gerald so."

"But I think, by his wanting to help you, he is showing regret for that. And shall not a man do what he likes with his own? Perhaps he did not quite like Gerald's asking him, or—well, perhaps, the tone of his letters. And then hearing all about you from Uncle Jack, and his art sympathies being touched, he has been glad to do this."

"Yes," said Jack, "and beggars mustn't be choosers. It's awfully good of him. Well, I'll try and repay him by painting him a jolly good picture some day. Yes, Grace," as he noticed she was looking at a letter on his writing-table, "I've been writing to tell Kate Ingham; she'll be so jolly glad."

Grace smiled approvingly. She knew Kate was the youth's ideal of all that a girl should be, and that a

very pretty friendship was established between him and "the jolliest girl" he had ever seen, as he once called her. Kate would rejoice in his success and write him a bright little letter full of sympathy, and Jack would carry it about in his breast-pocket many a day and read it over and over until it was wellnigh worn out. More than that Grace could not foresee; they were both so young, their friendship might change in any way.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE MEETING AT LUCERNE.

"You bear a gentle mind, and heavenly blessings
Follow such creatures."

—SHAKESPEARE.

ON leaving England the Hartleys made straight for Lucerne, where they engaged rooms at the Schweizerhof, with the intention of making that their headquarters for a week or two.

With the exception of Maude, they were all in the highest possible spirits and just in the disposition to enjoy a holiday and change in the midst of such new and lovely surroundings. Mrs. Hartley was rejoicing in the recovery—though they had been obliged to leave him at home—of her best-beloved child, who now, she thought, thanks to Uncle Jack, would have no difficulty in finding the

career best suited to his abilities. And perhaps the fond mother thought in her inmost heart that, with such a rich uncle as Uncle Jack had turned out to be, there would be no necessity for him to work at all. Anyway, her views and Uncle Jack's were not likely to coincide about the desirability of that. And then, another cause for her satisfaction arose from finding herself, as she phrased it, once more in her true position—among those of whom it may be said: "They toil not, neither do they spin." Perhaps after her late struggles a little feeling of complacency on her part may be readily pardoned.

Grace and George Turner—Uncle Jack had specially invited the latter to join them—were of course supremely happy in each other's society, and in forming together plans connected with the new life that lay before them. As they said, they ought to consider themselves most fortunate people in having two honeymoons—one before and one after the wedding-day.

Perhaps, however, Uncle Jack felt happier than any of them. Eminently unselfish, a great part of his satisfaction arose from the contemplation of the content and delight now experienced by the rest of the party. Moreover, he alone was untroubled by anxiety about Maude, because he felt confident that the cloud which hung dark, and apparently impenetrable, over her life would soon vanish. Already he saw the silver lining.

As for Maude, she said to herself that she had the deepest cause for thankfulness. Gerald had been proved innocent of even unintentionally wounding the father of the man she still loved, and she had escaped from an engagement which had been from the very first odious to her in every way. Yes, but then she and Eustace were

parted. They were still divided, although the obstacle which formerly stood between them was gone; nay, never had existed except in her imagination and in those of others. But the truth had come out too late. She had sent Eustace away; and she could not, dared not recall him. To do so would seem bold, unmaidenly and perhaps futile. Perhaps, before that he had forgotten her. Perhaps, even—and her heart sank at the very thought—he had learned to love another, fairer, richer, less capricious and inconstant, he would think, than herself. For he must have deemed her fickle and unstable. To send him from her and assign no reason! Oh, no man could forget that.

And so, she thought, there remained for her nothing to do but try and forget her lover and the happy dreams in which she had once indulged.

Mrs. Hartley had learned from her brother the motives underlying her younger daughter's apparently extraordinary conduct in first engaging herself to Crossland and then breaking off the engagement. With that explanation, too, was coupled the reason of Eustace Ingham's conduct in suddenly ceasing his attentions to her. The mother was exceedingly pleased to find that she had not been at fault in fancying that he was attached to Maude. And, to do her justice, it must be stated also that she was gratified to discover how honorably the young man had behaved. She had been disposed to criticise harshly his abrupt departure from Marburn; now she learned that he went in grief and pain of mind because her daughter had dismissed him in a manner which must have been intensely galling. And then, her knowledge of Maude's self-sacrificing spirit was not without good results to herself. She had never

been one to bear the honors of martyrdom gracefully and with patience; nor suffer the little trials and vexations of life with a calm, tranquil and cheerful mind. Quite the contrary, in fact. Adversities, both small and great, rather tended to sour her naturally amiable temper and rendered her impatient and peevish, fretful and given to murmuring; and Maude's heroic behavior and uncomplaining demeanor in the midst of heavy trials was not without a good influence upon her. Unconsciously, perhaps, she contrasted herself with Maude, and unconsciously, too, caught something of the girl's spirit. Henceforward her love and devotion to Maude increased immensely, and every day she felt more and more distress at seeing her sadness. She would fain have removed it, but, unfortunately, her discretion was hardly commensurate with her good wishes.

"I am so grieved, dearest," she whispered to Maude, one day when they were alone, "so grieved at seeing you are not as happy as the rest. But can't we try and remove the little misunderstanding which arose between you and Mr. Ingham. Supposing I were to write and—and explain matters a little."

A faint blush mantled the girl's cheek for an instant. It seemed the harbinger of reviving hope. But the next moment it had gone, and deathly pallor speaking of despair resumed its seat.

"No, mother," she murmured, "you must not, must not do that. Perhaps by this time Eustace—Mr. Ingham has found out how easy it is for—for a man to forget. And if he came back to me it might be through mere pity. And, oh, the very shame of even thinking that!" Here Maude covered her face with her slender hands. "Promise me, promise me, mother, you will not

write," she urged, placing her arms caressingly round her mother's neck.

"No, of course not, my dear, since you don't wish it," said Mrs. Hartley, sorely troubled at her distress.

A woman possessing a little more tact and—shall it be said?—finer feeling would have written to Eustace without consulting Maude. But then, if she had done so, and had received an unfavorable reply to her letter, she would not have been able to keep it strictly to herself. For even a tender heart, unless allied with a discreet mind, may blunder into inflicting the severest wounds.

Fortunately for Maude, however, Uncle Jack had taken her love affairs into his own hands. Even old bachelors are not always averse to a little romance, and no doubt, as a rule, prefer love stories with a happy ending. Uncle Jack, at least, did. What joy for him, then, to bring that smoothness to the course of true love of which the poet speaks! Having obtained Eustace Ingham's address from his mother, he wrote to him, before leaving England, in a concise, businesslike manner, giving the true explanation of Maude's rejection of his suit. Then, after stating that they were going on the Continent and intended to remain a few weeks at Lucerne, he ended by saying that he had written the letter without the cognizance of Maude or any of her relations.

"There," he said to himself, as he sealed the letter, "let no one say I haven't done my duty toward these young people. If they don't make it up again, why it won't be my fault. I have given him a pretty broad hint, and we shall soon see whether he takes it or not. Some people might say, inelegantly, that I am throwing

Maude at the young fellow's head. Well, let people say or think what they like. I am not going to suffer the happiness of two young lives to be wrecked for want of a little explanation. Proper pride is all very well; but common sense is a good deal better."

Judging from his smile of satisfaction it was evident that Uncle Jack considered that *he* had displayed a remarkable amount of the latter, by no means common commodity, in writing to Eustace Ingham.

The latter was at Venice, on his way home from Egypt, when Uncle Jack's letter reached him. He read it with feelings of the utmost bewilderment, which quickly changed into those of the utmost satisfaction, and, as he realized what it all meant, the most intense delight.

Rushing off to the post-office, he sent a telegram to Hartley, saying he would be in Lucerne at the earliest possible moment.

Two hours later he had left Venice.

Upon arriving at Lucerne, and after engaging rooms at the Golden Eagle, he sent a note to Uncle Jack asking the favor of a few minutes' interview with him.

Uncle Jack answered the letter in person and with the utmost speed.

"How can I thank you sufficiently?" cried the young man, warmly shaking his hand and speaking with heightened color in his cheeks and eyes, which sparkled with delight.

"The pleasure of seeing you here so soon is quite sufficient return for anything I have done," replied Hartley, with a smile. "It was rather a delicate business writing as I did, for I might have been snubbed for my pains in case—in case—"

"Yes, in case what?" asked Eustace, with an amused air.

"Why, confound it, man, you know what I mean—in case you had fallen *out* of love with the girl! There, that's a new expression for you; but the meaning of it is quite plain, I guess."

"Yes, the expression, if somewhat new, is quite clear," replied Eustace. "Need I *say* that I have not changed?"

"No," replied the other, bluntly, "or you wouldn't be here now. But there's another thing I want to say now before you see Maude—she could hardly say it herself. That scoundrel Crossland forced the poor girl into an engagement with himself under the threat of denouncing Gerald as your poor father's murderer! There, what do you think of that? And, mark you, he knew all the time that Gerald was perfectly innocent."

"What a villain!" cried Eustace, hotly. "I should like to give him a horse-whipping! And how poor Maude must have suffered," he added, in gentler tones.

"Suffered? I believe you; and like a first-rate martyr, too, bravely, silently and patiently. Young man," he went on, impressively, laying his hand on Ingham's shoulder, "you have won the heart of an angel; take care how you treat such a priceless treasure."

Eustace made some incoherent reply, intended to be expressive of his future endeavors to deserve what he had won. Happiness is not always the best aid to clear thought or logical expression. But Uncle Jack seemed to consider his reply quite satisfactory.

After a little further conversation, in the course of which, many little points connected with the history of

the past few months were explained to Ingham's satisfaction, Hartley prepared to take his leave.

"Before I go," said he, "there is just one other matter to be settled: you would like to see Maude to-night, and, if possible, alone."

"I should, indeed," said Eustace.

"Of course. I quite understand that. The sooner you come to a perfect understanding the better. Very well, then, if you come to the Schweizerhof between seven and eight this evening, and inquire for our room, I will arrange that Maude shall be there by herself. How will that do?"

"Oh, admirably; but it is rather a long time to wait," replied Eustace, somewhat ruefully.

"Rather long, eh?" said Uncle Jack, laughing. "Well, but I'm afraid I can't arrange my little plot to give you a private interview sooner. My dear fellow, may you always find the hours of separation from that noble girl as hard to bear."

Maude readily consented to her uncle's request that she would remain with him that evening when the others went out for a drive, probably imagining that he wanted her society all to himself. For they often took long walks together.

"Wait for me here, dear," he said, as he went out just after the others had gone, leaving her alone in their private sitting-room.

Buried in painful, regretful thought about Eustace, the girl sat waiting until just as the clock in the nearest church-tower was chiming the half-hour a gentle knock came to the door.

"Come in," she said, turning round from the window by which she was standing, expecting to see one of the

many friends they had made during their stay at Lucerne.

The door opened, and Eustace Ingham stood before her.

A stranger might have thought him an ill-timed visitor, for Maude remained as if rooted to the ground, calm and motionless, no word of greeting on her lips, no smile of welcome on her face. For a moment she stood gazing at him in bewilderment, then her eyes slowly drooped and she began to tremble violently.

Eustace was infinitely distressed at observing how pale and wan she had grown since their last meeting.

For a brief time he, too, stood motionless, irresolute. Then hastily advancing toward her, and seizing one of her hands, he whispered, in tender, loving tones: "Maude, dearest, you will not send me from you again?"

At the sound of his pleading voice the rich color rushed to the girl's cheeks and the strength came back to her trembling limbs—for joy is a mighty stimulus—while her lovely eyes, luminous with happiness, were slowly uplifted to meet his ardent gaze.

"No, Eustace," she replied, in accents faint with exceeding joy, "for there is nothing to separate us now."

The next moment she was folded in his arms.

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Happy, thrice happy the meeting when two who have parted in sorrow can meet again with no bitter memories of hasty, unkind words or cruel actions intruding like unbidden, unwelcome guests upon the sacred solemnity of that festival-time. Happy the twain when neither has aught to ask forgiveness for and neither has aught

to forgive. When, although the music has suddenly ceased, there has been no little "rift within the lute." When no nervous apprehensions, no ill-timed mistrust of the future, born of past experience, springs up irrepressible, resistless in the soul of one or both! And blissful beyond the powers of speech is the reunion of two lovers' hearts, who, in a long interval of separation, full of trials and difficulties, have proved ever loyal to the voice of conscience, truth and duty.

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"Uncle Jack," cried Maude, rushing toward him as he entered the room about half-past eight—he had allowed the lovers ample time to exchange a few confidences—"how could I ever thank you for all you have done?" And she threw her arms round his neck, giving him at the same time two or three hearty kisses. "It was you," she added, "it was you who wrote to Eustace."

"Ah, I see he has been telling tales," and the old gentleman shook his head; "that's bad, very bad. You mustn't encourage him in that. But if you really want to thank me, well, try and look always as happy as you do now. Yes, and as pretty, too," and he looked at her blushing face with a most critical eye. "You've no idea what difference a little color makes to a girl's face."

"Ah, it's easy to grow roses in your cheeks when—when you've got happiness in your heart, uncle, dear," cried Maude, gayly.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONCLUSION.

CROSSLAND'S DEFEAT.

“Falsehood and fraud shoot up in every soil,
The product of all climes.”

—ADDISON.

ON his return home two circumstances caused Crossland the utmost astonishment. The first was that he found Ivy Cottage shut up. Even the maid-servant, the faithful but eccentric Jane, had deserted it, having gone home, he was informed, to her mother's at Rushton. Where the family had gone to he had no means of ascertaining; indirect means, that is, for he dared not make inquiries in the neighborhood, for the sake of appearances. Public opinion would have considered it a most remarkable thing that a young lady's lover should be in complete ignorance as to her whereabouts. So out of deference to the opinions of others Crossland had to assume a little knowledge and conceal a considerable amount of ignorance.

He *did* inquire of the housekeeper at Willow Lodge

when she expected Mr. Hartley to return, but that worthy woman was either unable or unwilling to give him any information. So he could only wait as patiently as he could, in the hope that some early post would bring him a letter explaining what seemed so mysterious.

The other cause of his astonishment was receiving "notice" from the police authorities at Rushton bidding him attend at the courthouse, on a certain date, to give evidence against William Sikes, then and there to be charged with unlawful trespass in pursuit of game, etc., etc.

"What on earth do the stupid, meddling fools want with me?" muttered he to himself. "What do I know or care about Sikes and his poaching? Why, I don't believe the fellow has been near the place lately—not since—" and he uttered an exclamation of disgust.

Later on in the day he met with Sikes, who, judging from his appearance, seemed to have a very slight dread of any penalties that might be awaiting his alleged infraction of the law. He was strolling along the village street, with his hands in his pocket, smoking the pipe of sweet content. Nor did the sight of Crossland disturb his equanimity in the least.

"Mornin', sir," said he, withdrawing one hand from his pocket in order to touch his cap to Crossland.

"So you've got into trouble again, have you?" said Crossland, bruskiy, giving him an angry glance.

"Ain't I unfortnit, sir?" said Sikes, with a broad grin on his face. "Jes to fancy they bobbies should have

foun' me out after all these months! Mighty sharp they be a-gettin', surelie!"

"After all these months! What did the man mean?" asked Crossland of himself.

"Yes, sir," said Sikes, answering his look of inquiry; "you know that there time as you citched me a-comin' 'ome from Marden Spinney."

Crossland turned away in disgust and alarm. What a misfortune that the police should be raking up that affair of all others!

There was a full bench of magistrates and a crowded court on the day of Sikes's trial. It seemed as if public interest had been aroused. But why? Crossland couldn't attempt to answer the question. After all, Sikes was only a vulgar if somewhat notorious poacher. And his appearance before the authorities was a pretty frequent event. But the solution of the mystery appeared to Crossland later on in the day.

Sikes's case occupied but little time. Crossland was the chief witness. On being called, he testified to having caught him, on the 18th of November, returning from the direction of Marden Spinney with certain pheasants and rabbits in his possession.

"Could you give the approximate time when you caught him?" inquired Mr. Walters, the prosecuting solicitor.

"Oh, yes, I think so," replied Crossland, carelessly. "Let me see. Oh, yes, I heard the turret clock striking three just a few minutes before."

"Thank you," replied Mr. Walters, "that will do," and Crossland sat down.

Then the village constable testified that he had met Sikes returning home in the village street just as the church clock was striking half-past three. He had searched him and found no game upon him. "Which was only likely when Mr. Crossland had taken it himself," he added, in an injured tone.

That concluded the case for the prosecution. There was no case for the defense. Mr. Sikes had retained no advocate, nor did he call any witness to refute, if possible, the evidence given against him.

After a brief consultation with his brother magistrates the chairman of the bench pronounced that the defendant had been proved guilty of the offense alleged against him and must pay a fine of five pounds or go to prison for a month.

Whereupon Sikes, with the utmost nonchalance and cheerfulness, produced and duly paid his fine.

Then came the great sensation of the day. Into the place just vacated by Sikes stepped Gerald Hartley, attired in the gay uniform of a private in the 16th Lancers.

He, too, was charged with having been guilty of the same offense as Sikes—an offense committed at the same place and on the same night.

Crossland could hardly believe that he saw and heard aright. Sikes stepped forward again. This time as a witness. He testified that on the night of the 18th of

November, shortly before three o'clock in the morning, he was poaching in Marden Spinney when he suddenly heard a shot fired behind and felt the effect of it in his neck and shoulders. Thinking it was a keeper who had fired at him he hurriedly made his escape. Saw some one in front of him running; getting a little nearer, perceived that it was the defendant, Gerald Hartley. The moon was shining very brightly, so had no difficulty in recognizing him—could see he had a gun with him.

Substantially that was Sikes's evidence.

Then once more Crossland was called as witness, and, in answer to the inquiries of the prosecuting solicitor, he stated that he had seen the defendant returning homeward from the direction of Marden Spinney on the night of the 18th.

"Can you tell us the exact time?" asked Mr. Walters.

Crossland hesitated a moment. He knew how much depended upon his answer. But evasion, or willful denial, was out of the question. For in the court he saw his head groom; the probability was that he also would be called as a witness; together they had seen Gerald Hartley. Moreover, his admission of having seen Sikes some few minutes after three approximately fixed the hour at which Gerald had passed his house. And so, truthfully, but with a sinking heart, he replied: "It was just striking three when I saw him."

"Ah, yes; thank you, Mr. Crossland, that will do. Oh, by-the-by," he added, as if it were an afterthought, "whereabouts did you find the defendant's gun?"

"About half-way between my house and Marden Spinney," replied Crossland.

"Now, I think that will do," returned Mr. Walters, blandly.

"Yes, that will do," was the mental comment of nearly every one in court that morning. For it was generally recognized that although the evidence given quite proved Gerald Hartley guilty of one offense, it also quite proved him to be innocent of another and greater offense, that being the attack upon the late Squire Ingham.

For it was well known that the deceased gentleman left his home at half-past three, and was shot, according to the evidence of his watch—a remarkably good time-keeper, which was stopped by the shot—exactly at four, an hour when it was now seen Gerald Hartley would be safe at home.

The magistrates inflicted a fine, which Gerald also paid with great cheerfulness.

As he left the court quite a crowd was assembled; by many of whom he was regarded as an object of pity. It seemed rather a shame, they thought, that the police should rake up a matter—merely a boyish freak, too—which had passed so many months ago.

Others, however, who were a little more behind the scenes, loudly expressed their opinion that he had got off very lightly. Of course the charge of poaching was a mere "put-up job" arranged with the ostensible object of thoroughly clearing the young man of another and more serious offense, with which his name had been

connected. Ah, it was not everybody in trouble who could explain away suspicious circumstances so easily as young Mr. Hartley. He ought to be very thankful, indeed. Perhaps this would be a lesson to him. And knowing that Gerald's sister was engaged to Crossland, public opinion not unnaturally inclined to the belief that his appearance as witness was simply part of the plan which had been carried out with such satisfactory results.

Crossland drove home, conscious of defeat. He had played for high stakes and lost. Maude would never be his; for of course she knew everything! *Everything*; the fullest extent of his infamy. No, she would never be his. But now she was free to marry Ingham. Doubtless he would soon learn the truth, and then eagerly come forward again, to woo successfully where he had himself so completely failed.

That thought filled Crossland's heart with the fury of hell, and he ground his teeth in mortification and rage.

The next morning brought additional pangs. For he received a packet from Maude, containing his presents, and a brief note, stating that the engagement between them was at an end.

Crossland's mind as to his future arrangements was soon made up. To remain in Marburn after what had happened was out of the question. The prospect of living there, so near, and seeing Maude and Eustace engaged

and then happily married was quite intolerable. The bare idea caused exquisite torture.

A way of escape lay before him. A wealthy friend was wishing to invest money in land. Crossland offered him his estate at a reasonable price, on condition his mother should be allowed to make the house her home while she lived. The offer was accepted, and long before Maude returned from Switzerland Crossland left Marburn forever.

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The fine old bells of the ancient church of Marburn rang merrily on the day when the young squire, as Eustace was still called, married Maude Hartley, while at the same time her sister and the very popular, because always kind, agent, George Turner, were also united in the bonds of holy matrimony.

The joyous sound was carried far and wide, and even penetrated to old Job Turner's fireside and could be heard even by his dull ears.

"Ay, but it's grand," he said, in his thin, querulous tones, "to think that our lad should marry a right lady like Miss Hartley, and have a fine income of his own! Ay, and I'm glad her sister didn't marry that Crossland. A bad man!" and he shook his head. "They say he's gone clean away and won't come back no more. What did the old Psalm say, Mary? 'Their place will know them *no more*.' Them that's been bad and lifted up and

proud like Crossland. Now he's gone—and his place knows him *no more*. Not but I'm sorry for him, too—just now, when everybody's glad—it seems a pity, a great pity, he should be so sad—and his mother left alone in her old age.”

Mrs. Turner turned and looked at him with a very wistful expression in her patient face. Was he learning a brighter note, after a lifetime spent in harping on a minor key?

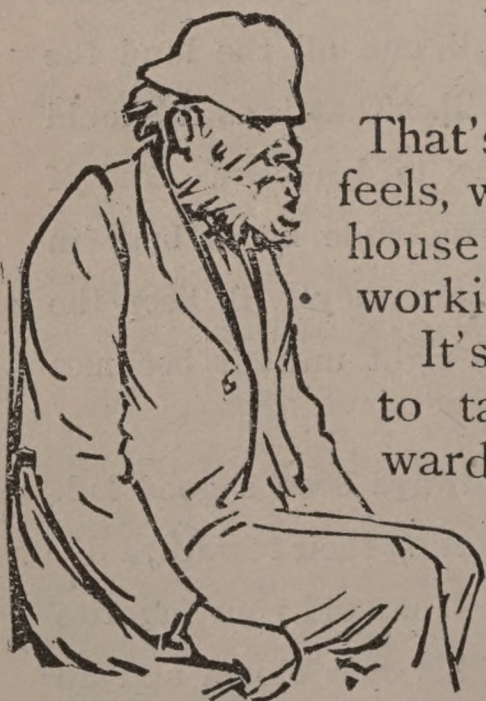
“God help him,” she said, softly, “and make him a better man.” Then, after a little pause, she added: “I'm so pleased that Mr. Hartley is going to leave Miss Maude and Mr. Ingham the Hall, and all the land the family used to occupy, in his will. That is as it should be—then Mr. Eustace will come to his own. And if his mother and uncle live there, while he is busy in London at his work as a barrister, they will keep the place up nicely and everything right until it becomes his.”

“Ay,” said old Job, “he has always been a good lad. And I hold with the good ones getting their reward, I do. He'll live there in his old age. What did your favorite verse say, Mary? Oh, I know,” his eyes closed and he added, drowsily: “‘Mark the perfect man—for the end of—that man—is peace.’” And with that his head fell back against the cushions of his old armchair, and, worn out with the emotions which had stirred his heart, he fell asleep.

Mrs. Turner knelt beside him on the soft rug, and,

while happy tears filled her eyes, her lips uttered a low but sincere prayer of thankfulness. Her old husband was indeed greatly changed for the better, and the knowledge of this crowned her happiness that day.

THE END.



Homeless!

That's the way your husband feels, when you're trying to clean house in the old-fashioned, hard-working, fussy way.

It's enough to drive any man to take the first steps downward. You can just as well make home pleasant while you are making it clean. Take **Pearline** to it.

That saves so much work that house-cleaning is no trouble, either to the worker, or the looker-on. It's sooner over, and it's better done.

Beware of imitations.

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JAMES PYLE, New York.

KOHALA OF HAWAII

*A STORY OF THE SANDWICH
ISLANDS REVOLUTION*

BY

ALFRED R. CALHOUN

Specially written for "Once a Week Library"

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KOHALA OF HAWAII.

INTRODUCTION.

NO ALIEN land in all the world has so strong an attraction, so profound a charm for the American who has trod its emerald shores, as beautiful "Hawaii"—the native, and hence the proper, name for what Captain Cook, their discoverer, called the "Sandwich Islands." Sleeping or waking, how lovingly its beauties haunt me as I, fresh from its ever-blooming gardens and ever-burning volcanoes, sit down to write, from a heart that is full of it, the story of the last great drama enacted in that fair land, for whose possession the maritime nations of the world are intriguing to-day.

CHAPTER I.

THE PARADISE OF THE PACIFIC.

TWO MILES back from the capital city of Honolulu there rises an extinct volcano, known far and near as the "Punch Bowl," and accessible from the town by a fine road.

People in carriages, well-mounted equestrians and energetic pedestrians usually swarm about the Punch Bowl's rugged crest when the sun is setting, for then the ocean breeze is always cool and refreshing, and from Diamond

Head, to the east, to Pearl Harbor, on the west, there is such a panorama of exquisite beauty spread out before the observer as entrances newcomers and gives a never-ceasing delight to those who have seen it before.

The short twilight of the tropics was fading over Honolulu, but this evening the Punch Bowl appeared to be deserted, no doubt because the black cloud banners that threatened one of those brief but violent storms peculiar to these islands streamed out from Diamond Head and veiled the Pali's bloody cliff. The pulsating glow of sheet lightning illuminated these clouds, and a hoarse grumbling came down from the mountains to the garden-embowered city by the sea.

From the jungle of lantana, that clothes the Punch Bowl from base to crest, two young men, with a backward glance to make sure their horses were secure, walked out to the circular protecting wall around the summit. That they were men of nerve, or so familiar with the scene that they had a contempt for its dangers, was shown by the fact that they sat down on the wall, nor seemed to give thought to the fact that a stone, loosened by one as he adjusted himself to the place, plunged down for eight hundred feet of nearly precipitous descent.

Both these young men were dressed after the fashion of horsemen in Hyde Park, the Bois de Boulogne or Central Park. One was short, stout, blue-eyed, and had the florid face and thick neck which are usually found associated with men who know no enjoyment beyond those of the senses. Yet there was a set to the jaws, an expression about the chin and a certain firmness in his bearing that denoted force and had in it the suggestion of a military training.

The other man, although not above medium height, looked taller, because of his slender, erect figure and a certain easy, tigerish grace in his movements that indicated a rare union of strength and activity. The long black hair, the well-cut, olive features, the gleaming white teeth, and the dark eyes, that seemed to glow as if with an internal light, told that the man, whose age could not have been more than five-and-twenty, was a native, but a native of higher type and finer fiber than the average people of his race.

One by one, from amid the groves of palm and crimson hybiscus, the lights in Honolulu became visible, and the breakers that had seemed, as the man advanced to the wall, like rising and fading lines of snow on the shore became banks of liquid fire—never seen outside the tropics—banks that glowed with a strange, green, phosphorescent light, suggestive of cold rather than heat, like the flashing of the aurora borealis on an arctic wintry night.

That these men had not come up to view the scenery was shown by the fact that they did not look at it, but sat on the wall for some minutes without speaking, each appearing to be wrapped in his own thoughts and in the contemplation of the other's face.

Captain Paul Featherstone, the white man, was the first to break the silence. Speaking in accents that unmistakably bespoke his English nationality, and that indicated association with cultured people if not culture itself, he said:

“Kohala, I agree with you that the time is ripe for action. Since we first met, when you were studying in Paris two years ago, my faith in your claims to the throne of Hawaii and my appreciation of your fitness for the position have grown stronger and stronger. But

I would be a fool and not your friend if I closed my eyes to the difficulties that beset you—that beset us—for I have linked my fate with yours. Now that we are on the ground, we find a queen on the throne, whom your countrymen regard as legitimate, and with Americans among her advisers; but she is too blind to see that they are planning to depose her and to make Hawaii a part of their overgrown republic.”

Kohala, the young Hawaiian, tossed over the battlement a fragment of rock with which he had been toying and responded in tones that indicated impatience.

“I still think, Captain Featherstone, that you continue to misunderstand me.”

“In what way?” asked the captain, in surprise.

“In this way: Have I not proven clearly to you and to other friends that I, as the known, though as yet unrecognized, only male descendant of the great King Kamehameha, am the rightful sovereign of Hawaii?”

“Unmistakably,” replied the captain, in a voice that showed he considered this settled beyond the possibility of doubt.

“And have I not also told you and other friends that personally I cared nothing for the throne, that indeed I was not a believer in the divine right or any other right of kings, that I was and am at heart a republican?” said Kohala, in a voice raised above the previous key, but which only served the more to bring out its melody and to show that he loved to dwell on vowel sounds, but had no fondness for the harsher consonants that distinguish our Northern speech.

“Surely, you have told me all that,” replied the captain, “and, as your friend, I have not hesitated to oppose your views. I am an Englishman, and so believe in kings,

and queens, too, and so do not believe in the license of republics, such as we see in that overgrown monster to the east, through which you and I recently traveled."

"Captain Featherstone," said Kohala, in graver accents and with his fine, expressive face upraised to the lowering clouds, "I must still cling to my opinion about kings."

"And give up your claims to the throne?"

"A man is not fit to be a king whom his people, if left free to choose, would not select for a ruler. I have traveled through many lands, and my heart has bled at the vice, the poverty and the degradation that seem inseparable from civilization where kings rule, and to some extent in modern republics; but it is from this that I would save the remnant of my race. A century ago we numbered nearly half a million; to-day we are barely forty thousand. We have had kings and queens in Hawaii since and before the time of Cook's unfortunate discovery. Yet the work of civilization, of your civilization (?) goes on. The missionary is here, but so is the liquor seller; and the adventurer who has seized on our most beautiful valleys, and forced into the volcanic hills the natives who will not work in his sugar and coffee fields. I believe that the God of the white man is the God of the Hawaiian, and that He never meant that we should be destroyed, and that a race that worships only wealth and the power it represents should send us to the grave and erect their palaces where we were once so happy. I want to arouse the people to a sense of their duty. I want to show them that a descendant of the great king who united them is ready to lead them in the assertion of their rights, and that he is willing to die for them, if his death will accomplish the purpose that is so near and so dear to his heart,

and that fills him and thrills him, whether sleeping or waking."

"All this is noble," said the Englishman, "but is it practical?"

"Whatever is right must be made practical," replied Kohala, with spirit.

"True; still we must take things as they are and not as we would have them." Then with a forced laugh that indicated his feelings and character more than anything he said, Captain Featherstone added: "We live in a practical age—an age of selfishness, when dreamers are laughed at or forced to the wall. My country, England, has flourished because she realizes that material prosperity is the only foundation of success. If you see fit to adopt her methods, as I have told you before, you will find her a friend. She can place you on the throne and keep you on it, but it will be necessary for you to follow her instructions—"

"And to be her tool—her slave?" broke in Kohala.

"No; to be her ally and her friend. Republics may foster slaves; it is England's boast that every man breathing the air protected by her flag is a free man. But a storm threatens, let us be getting back. And then, I think the queen will be disappointed if you are not at the ball to-night."

"She would rather see me there dead than alive," said Kohala, and, as he arose from the wall, another stone was loosened and went thundering into the valley in the direction of Honolulu.

"And the beautiful widow, Mrs. Holmes. Don't you think she will miss you if you are absent from the palace to-night?" laughed the Englishman, as they turned in the direction of the horses.

“Would the sun miss one of the smaller planets that circle about it, seen only by its light? No; I might miss the face of the fair Englishwoman from the scene, but amid so many admirers, men of her own race, Marguerite Holmes could hardly be aware that Kohala, the Kanaka pretender, was present or absent.”

This was said with some bitterness, yet there was that in the young prince's accents, and particularly in the caressing way in which he pronounced the lady's name, that told he did not regard her as an ordinary mortal.

By the time the two men were in the saddle the storm that had been gathering about the mountains to the north burst upon the Punch Bowl and shut out the myriad electric lamps that had been glowing with a cold white light in the direction of Honolulu.

The winding road from the crest of the hill was unobstructed and of easy descent, and the horses were eager to be back in their stalls, so the riders gave them free rein, and flew down to the line at a gallop, which was maintained till they swept into grounds illuminated by lamps and the light coming through the windows of a broad, low building, about which ran a wide piazza, such as is peculiar to the better class of houses in Honolulu.

As the riders dismounted two native men appeared to take the horses, and the salaams and salutations of love and respect with which they greeted Kohala showed that he had at least two strong adherents in the capital of Hawaii.

CHAPTER II.

THE BALL AT THE PALACE.

SET amid groves of palms and surrounded by parterres of ever-blooming flowers, the national palace at Honolulu, with its stately architecture and its indications of refined taste and exquisite luxury, presents a pleasing picture when seen under the blaze of the midday sun. At all hours a native soldier, in a white uniform, paces on guard before the cataract of marble steps leading up to the grand entrance hall, and this adds to the air of exclusiveness that seems to bar the structure from the outside world, as a great wall might not do.

But beautiful and inviting though the palace is in the golden sunlight, it becomes doubly so at night, when Queen Liliuokalani (pronounced Lily-wak-a-lee-nee) gives a *fete champetre*, a band concert or a ball. On such occasions the palace is all aglow with light, and the great doors and windows are opened to permit it to pour out in soft golden streams. The cunning of the Chinese gardeners is invoked, and a wonderful transformation is effected. Tiny fairy-lamps are concealed so skillfully among the flower-banks that each blossom seems to glow with its own light. Like luminous fruit, colored lamps flash amid the graceful fronds of the towering palms, and arches of colored lights span the winding walks, and festoons of lights, like vines of iridescent flame, link the trees and dazzle the sight of the beholder.

Behind a screen of flowering cacti and plumelike

ferns the Queen's band is concealed on these festive occasions, but this serves but to increase the effect of the music that fills the palace halls, and sets the light feet of the pleasure-seekers a-moving, and forces the walk of the promenaders into a dancing measure, till even the most prosaic feels that he has left the harsh, materialistic world behind him and is transported to fairyland.

Newcomers to Hawaii, who had been honored by an invitation to the Queen's ball to-night, feared that the storm that burst on the city after sunset would interfere with the attendance, or at least with the pleasure of the occasion; but the older residents, who knew how brief these storms were, laughed at their fears, and declared that the rain would add to the attractiveness of the ball, by laying the dust and cooling the air; and they were right.

By nine o'clock that evening the sky was as clear as if it had never floated a raincloud. The moon and the larger stars shone down with a brilliancy unknown in higher latitudes; and from over the coral barrier reef there came the droning sound of the breakers, lulling the city to sleep. But to the gay throngs in and about the palace the night would be all too short, nor would the morning be welcome that brought repose.

From long lines of carriages, ladies and gentlemen in evening dress, and of all nationalities, descended and poured up the great stairs to the apartments where attendants took charge of their wraps, then came down to the drawing-room to pay their respects to the Queen, who, surrounded by her maids of honor, received them with graciousness and dignity, some of which was natural, but much more of which was assumed.

The Queen's dazzling evening dress served to make

more pronounced the more than becoming plumpness of her figure, while it intensified the darkness of her complexion. The full, sensuous lips and a certain indescribable coquetry in her manner, which was particularly perceptible when she was talking to gentlemen, told that fifty-two years, while they might have left silver streaks in the regal dowager's hair, had not weakened her opinion of her powers to captivate.

Queen Liliuokalani's maids of honor on this occasion were, with two exceptions, Hawaiians. With more adroitness, or less faith in her own simple but antiquated charms, the Queen might have selected young women whose beauty was less pronounced; but she had not done so. The exquisite olive faces, framed in masses of dark hair, rendered blacker and more luminous by intertwined crimson blossoms, the finely molded arms and busts and the lithe, graceful forms of the Hawaiian maids of honor were well calculated to withdraw from Her Majesty the admiring glances of the uniformed officers and foreign representatives who attended the ball.

It has been said that two of the maids of honor, though their position as such was only for this evening, were not natives. One of these was a beautiful American girl, Alice Ellis, the daughter of one of the richest sugar planters on the island, and the other was an Englishwoman, who at the first glance did not seem to be a person who could attract much attention; this was "Mrs. Marguerite Holmes," as her cards indicated.

Mrs. Marguerite Holmes had been in Honolulu less than a year. She had left England for California some eighteen months before this, in the hope of restoring the health of her husband, Professor Holmes, who, it was

said, contracted, from overstudy at Oxford, the disease which sent him to the grave before he had been a month at Los Angeles. When, soon after her husband's death, Mrs. Holmes came to Hawaii, and said it was for her health, no one was inclined to dispute her, for she was frail to emaciation, and she had such an innocent, girl-ish expression and was so unworldly as to call for the protection of strong men, and, at first, for the sympathy of her own sex.

If Mrs. Holmes's most ardent admirer—and it will be seen that she had many such—were asked if she were beautiful the unhesitating answer would be "No." If asked if she were pretty, the answer would be varied and qualified; but if asked if she were attractive, and particularly to men who imagined they had reached years of discretion, it would be generally conceded that she was decidedly so. But as she was neither intellectual nor accomplished, though unmistakably well bred, her most ardent advocate—and she needed such—would be at a loss to tell in what she excelled or why he was drawn so irresistibly to her.

Mrs. Holmes was of medium height, and so slender as to seem angular in contrast with the superbly formed women about her. Her neck was thin, but this, like every other physical defect, was concealed by the skill of her comparatively plain yet perfectly arranged attire. Her finely formed head was covered by a coil of silky, gold-bronze hair, that glistened with a rich metallic sheen under the lights. Over the forehead the wavy fringe looked very much darker and suggested to the trained eye the ravages of the curling-iron. The forehead was low, but fairly broad and full over the temples. The eyebrows were unusually thick, meeting over a by

no means classic nose, and they looked black in contrast with the hair. The eyes, long-lashed and gray, and with an expression that momentarily changed from girlish coyness to skilled coquetry, were the redeeming feature of the face. The complexion was pale, the mouth almost childish in its pouting uncertainty, and the chin far from indicating strength. Yet, taken as a whole, and particularly when animated, Mrs. Holmes looked like an innocent, captivating girl of nineteen, though she confessed to being twenty-six.

This was the woman about whom all Honolulu was now talking, some in unmistakable laudation and others in doubt and denunciation quite as positive. To some she was a gentle, guileless, charming woman, who needed protection and sympathy; to others she was a heartless, designing adventurer, if, indeed, she were not something far worse.

The crush of visitors had been received by the Queen, and she was about to withdraw, when the names of Kohala and Captain Paul Featherstone were announced. Barely bowing to the Englishman, who at once drew Mrs. Holmes to one side and entered into earnest conversation with her, the Queen gave her young countryman her hand, which he did not kiss, as the others had done, and said in good English:

"I feared, my cousin, that you would not honor us to-night?"

"I was caught in the storm," he said, "but I am too good a Hawaiian not to regard as a command the invitation of our Queen."

"I might, indeed, believe your presence a compliment and an indication of your loyalty did I not fear that another and a more powerful attraction than myself

brought you to the palace to-night." Here the Queen smiled and inclined her head toward Mrs. Holmes; then before the young man could recover from his evident confusion and reply, she added: "But as we can talk again this evening, I shall not detain you. I fully appreciate your eagerness to be with another."

With this sally Her Majesty waved her hand, and, followed by nearly all her maids, left the drawing-room.

One of the girls, who remained back, was a Hawaiian of not more than seventeen. She was a lithe, beautiful girl, with a face as perfect as ever sculptor's chisel formed, and eyes such as never a painter transferred to canvas. This girl was Leila, daughter of Keona, a renowned prince or chief of the great fire island of Hawaii, to the southeast of Oahu, on which Honolulu is situated.

As Kohala moved in the direction of Mrs. Holmes he felt a light touch on his arm, and turning, with the quick start of one rudely aroused from a dream, he saw the beautiful Leila standing with drooping head beside him.

Taking her hand, after a pause, like one obeying a second impulse, Kohala said:

"Leila, I did not expect to see you here. When did you leave your father, and how did you leave him?"

"I left him well, two days ago," she replied. Then in a voice sunk to a flutelike whisper: "I bear you a message from my father, Kohala, and must see you to-night."

"I shall find you within the hour," was his response.

Leila followed in the direction the Queen had taken, but Kohala did not see that as she passed out her left hand was pressed to her heart, as if to still a pain.

The instant Captain Featherstone saw the young Hawaiian approaching he turned to Mrs. Holmes, gave her

a meaning glance and then moved off toward the dancers.

Kohala was evidently confused, and hesitated for a second as he held Mrs. Holmes's ungloved hand, but with grace and tact, and one of those arch smiles that were the strongest weapons in her armory, she said:

"I have been standing here looking for you all evening, Kohala, and now that you have rested my heart by coming I want you to take me to a place where I can rest my feet and we can talk without being disturbed."

"When you so well express my wishes," he said, with a pleased smile and a blush that lighted up his olive face, "there is no need for me to talk; indeed, I never can talk when you are near me. At such times I am quite content and happy in looking and watching."

"And in coining princely compliments," she said, with the slightest additional pressure on the arm she had taken and a glance through those wonderful long lashes that would have been potent with a more experienced man than Kohala.

The Queen's enemies, and there were many such, wondered why he had taken such a fancy to the young English widow, and some thought they saw in it an indication of England's secret diplomacy; while still others shrugged their shoulders and whispered the old adage: "Birds of feather flock together." And now as Kohala made his way to the gardens, evidently unconscious of everything but the slender, girlish figure by his side, men and women of both parties and all parties looked after them, and there were meaning nods and winks; and one lady, speaking with a decided New England accent, said to her escort:

"Well, she has a fine selection of sweethearts. To my

certain knowledge she is leading an old Mormon priest who lives near here to believe she is in love with him; and one of her greatest admirers, a young fellow who felt he must wear good clothes to stand well with her, was arrested a few days since for forgery. Old or young, black or white, she doesn't seem to care so that he's a man easily led and ready to be fooled. Bah! I loathe women of that class; they foster scandal and breed divorces!"

At the further end of the grounds from the palace there was and is a little summer-house, where at times the Queen retires when she wishes to be undisturbed. To-night, with the moonlight sifting through the tangle of vines and falling on the broad rustic seat, it was an ideal place for lovers.

To this place Kohala escorted Mrs. Holmes, and when they were seated he still retained her hand. It was steady and cool, and his trembled and was feverish.

"Ah, with you by my side, Kohala," she said, with a touch on his arm that thrilled him, "this is far more delightful than the crowd, of which I have a horror, or the dancing, for which I never care—unless I can select my own partner, and as yet the world has not advanced enough to give us poor women that privilege."

"The world will soon be advanced enough," said Kohala, "to give to every human being every right that God intended that his children should enjoy—"

"Oh, now you are going to talk about liberty, and all that; things that I do not understand," she said, poutingly.

"No," he responded, "to-night I am going to talk of something that you, more than any woman I ever met, should understand perfectly."

"Oh, Kohala, you frighten me!" she said, as she drew nearer to him in her winning, childlike fashion, and clung to his arm as if to be protected from himself. Then, as if reassured by the contact: "But go on, and tell me what this subject is."

"It is love!" he said, and he bent over her till she must have felt his hot breath on her cheek.

"Love?" she repeated, questioningly.

"Yes, love; my love! But why should I tell you that of which your own heart must have convinced you, Marguerite?"

"Do not call me 'Marguerite'; those who like me call me Flossy," she said.

"Flossy let it be! Flossy, you know how I love you! You know that I have one great purpose in life, a purpose for which I would give my life! Yet you are nearer and dearer than that. Now give me the answer for which my heart has hungered since first we met!"

His arms were about her, and she made a faint effort to avoid the torrent of kisses which he rained on her face, that was never for an instant averted.

At length, though it may have been because of a rustle in the vines near by, he released her, and gasped:

"Now give me my answer! Do you love me?"

"I love you as I never loved man before," she replied.

"And you will be my wife? my queen?"

"Do not ask me that now. You must have patience. Wait, Kohala, wait till I have had time to think. No, not now!" she said, for she had risen to her feet and he was trying to draw her down to his side. "Let us go back to the palace. I—I am afraid we are watched!"

She had no fear of their being watched, nor did she

suspect it, as on his arm she returned to the palace, yet such was the case.

It was not to play the spy, but to ease the anguish at her own heart that Leila stole away from her friends in the palace and sought the seclusion of the garden. She was about to enter the summer-house when the low murmur of voices told her it was occupied. Before she could retrace her steps, Kohala and Marguerite Holmes came out, and as they disappeared in the direction of the palace the beautiful girl clung to the arbor for support and sobbed:

“Oh, she is heartless, and her plaything is the most precious thing in life to me!

CHAPTER III.

THE CONSPIRATORS.

“HOW DOES she live?” was a question which people skeptical as to Mrs. Holmes often asked each other. The answer was usually an arching of the eyebrows or a shrug of the shoulders. This question applied to the lady’s resources and not to the manner of her living. It was well known that with a maid, brought with her from England—this “maid,” as her mistress called her, was a taciturn woman of five-and-forty—Mrs. Holmes lived in the one-half of a large furnished cottage, rented from a respectable couple who had more room than they needed.

As Mrs. Holmes neither borrowed nor ran into debt her enemies were disappointed, for from their first dis-

like they had prophesied that she would do both before long, and that she would skip away on some steamer, when she was quite ready, and leave her creditors to curse their credulity.

It was the morning following the Queen's ball, and those who had attended, and whose duties did not call them up, were asleep. Mrs. Holmes, dressed in a loose red wrapper of some soft material that gave by its reflection a becoming glow to her usually pale cheeks, had had her breakfast by nine o'clock and was out in the garden attending the flowers, in her great love for which there certainly was no affectation. Suddenly, she came upon a lame kitten under the bushes, and though she had never seen it before, with a cry of mingled pain and sympathy she caught the little creature up, pressed it to her breast and ran into her own bedroom, which opened by swinging windows on the piazza.

"Clem!" she called out—"Clem" was the name by which she addressed the maid—"run across to Dr. Wallace and tell him I want him at once!"

Without a word the maid ran out, and Mrs. Holmes was making the kitten comfortable on a pillow when a gray-headed man of sixty, with an unmistakable medical expression, came in. He found Mrs. Holmes actually crying over the kitten.

"Ah," he said, as he recognized the object of her solicitude, "I feared it was yourself, but I see it is my kitten."

"Then there is all the more reason I should be kind to it, and that you should cure it," she said, drying her eyes with one hand and laying the other on his arm.

The doctor was a widower, but the expression in his eyes, as he turned to the woman, told that his remaining

so would depend entirely on her. He told her the kitten would soon be all right, adding, as he held her hand before leaving:

"If it should keep ill it will give me a good professional excuse for calling."

She looked at him in a way that said plainer than words: "I shall always be rejoiced to see you."

"They may slander that little widow as they please," said Dr. Wallace to a friend, to whom he related this incident shortly afterward, "but a woman with such a heart and such childlike ways must be an angel."

The doctor had been gone but a few minutes when Clem came into the chamber where her mistress was still fondling the cat and said that Captain Featherstone wished to see her in the parlor.

Mrs. Holmes hastily arranged her hair before a mirror, fastened a blue blossom in the high collar of her wrapper and went to see her guest. She gave the captain the same sweet smile she had given the doctor, and her reception was made more pronounced by her extending to him both hands; and, not to be outdone, he raised the hands to his lips and kissed them alternately.

"You have a wonderful constitution," he said, admiringly. "I feared you would be very weary after last night's carouse, but you are as fresh as a daisy. Now sit down, Marguerite—beg pardon, Flossy—and tell me the situation." And the captain placed a chair for her and sat down facing her.

"There is not much to tell at present," she said, with her eyes cast down in a pretty, demure way on her thin, interlocked fingers. "He wants me to marry him, and if I agreed to do that, I am certain he could be made to relinquish his republican notions."

"And why can't you agree? Mind you, I don't say that you shall marry him, that I could not stand; but we must be able to lead him. This is the situation: The natives on the other islands, and many here, believe he is the rightful heir to the throne of Hawaii, and they are ready to depose the Queen, if Kohala announces himself. With this young man on the throne, England can dominate these islands and the Yankees will be beaten at their own game; for if the adherents of Kohala do not oust the Queen the Americans will, and once they hoist their flag here and announce a protectorate they will be in control, and they will keep it. Success means a fortune to us, Marguerite, a future and a home in dear old England. I know it is not in your nature to play a false part, but for the present you must be an actor and hold your power over Kohala."

There was evidently a perfect understanding between these two; certainly the captain believed so. He had faith in Marguerite Holmes, but then so did any man who came within reach of her remarkable influence.

While Captain Featherstone was thus working for England's ends—and his own—by urging his countrywoman to retain her hold on a man he regarded as "a gilded savage," a number of American representative merchants and planters were holding what they call a "caucus" in a guarded room of the Hawaiian Hotel.

Among these Americans were two of the Queen's cabinet, men who had large interests on the islands, but who had won the enmity of Her Majesty by their republican manners and their opposition to what they very properly regarded as her arbitrary and unconstitutional methods.

One of these gentlemen had just announced that the

Queen, in defiance of established law, was about to promulgate a new constitution, which, if carried into effect, would make American property, which represented eighty per cent. of all the wealth in Hawaii, practically valueless and render the islands unsafe as the abode of any but a native.

"If we do not interfere to stop this," said one of the ministers, "the English will; and once England gets her hands on Hawaii she will not be in a hurry to relinquish her grasp."

Colonel Ellis, a rich planter from the island of Hawaii, and a man whose bearing and manners showed that his military title was not assumed, rose and said in a low-voiced, deliberate way, that was more effective than a vociferous address:

"The natives of Hawaii are as weary of their Queen as ourselves. Yet, they are a proud people and will never be content to have a white man at the head of their affairs, though white men direct them now. I think I see a way to getting rid of the Queen and at the same time placing, as an elected president, a man in the chair who is the rightful heir to the throne, and withal a native, and a young man of ability. When he was a lad, after the manner of these people, particularly the families of chiefs, he was espoused to Leila, daughter of the Chief Keona of Hawaii. If we could bring this marriage about at once, and Kohala, whose heart is wrapped up in the interests of his people, will agree to it, I am sure we can satisfy the natives and have a man in power who, while doing injustice to none, will co-operate with us for the good of all. Indeed, he told me, soon after his return, that under proper conditions he would favor annexation to the States, or such a pro-

tectorate as would take these islands forever out of the reach of these avaricious European nations, now so eager to possess them."

"Colonel Ellis," said Mr. George King, a gentleman interested in the lumber trade between Honolulu and Puget's Sound, "have you been watching this young Kohala of late?"

"I have not," was the reply; "but I am quite sure he is doing nothing that is not right."

"I suppose," laughed Mr. King, "that none of us would call anything so natural as falling in love, wrong?"

The company laughed, and, to a man, said: "Of course not."

"But with whom has Kohala fallen in love?" asked Colonel Ellis.

"I am told on good authority that he is one of the most devoted admirers of this Englishwoman, Mrs. Holmes," said Mr. King.

"Mrs. Holmes!" repeated Colonel Ellis.

"Then you have not heard of her? That proves that you have been away from Honolulu. She is a young widow, neither rich, talented nor particularly prepossessing, if you come to analyze her, who has half the men in love with her, and the other half, with about all the women, denouncing her. Among the women, however, is not Her Majesty, for Mrs. Holmes, with her peculiarly insinuating ways, has made herself a frequent, and so a welcome, visitor at the palace. Why, last night, I heard Her Majesty joking the little widow about Kohala, and the little widow purred in her kittenish way, and looked pleased."

"I see it!" said Colonel Ellis, with unusual energy. "The Queen wants Kohala to marry a white woman."

That act would kill him with the natives and she knows it. But, surely, the young man is not infatuated with this unknown person?"

"But he is," persisted Mr. King and others.

"Then," said the colonel, "we must act to prevent such an alliance. Either Kohala must give up this woman, or, better still, she must be forced to leave Honolulu."

CHAPTER IV.

THE QUEEN'S PROPOSITION.

OUTSIDE the door of the room in the Hawaiian Hotel, where the Americans were assembled, there was stationed a guard to prevent intrusion, and every man who passed this guard did so by virtue of a pass-word.

During the meeting, fully twenty men were admitted in this way, mostly Americans, but there were not a few German and French merchants among the company, who frankly confessed that they would prefer that Hawaii should belong to their own countries, but who, as this was not feasible, were determined that England should not add these beautiful islands to her vast Polynesian possessions.

These foreigners, if such they can be called, strongly advocated forcing the Queen from the throne, and then asking Captain Wiltze, of the United States warship *Boston*, for American protection, until such times as the leading citizens should decide on a permanent form of government.

In anticipation of just such a movement, Colonel

Ellis had drawn up, before coming to the meeting, a scheme of organization that would insure protection until a convention representative of all interests should decide on annexation to the United States, or to form an independent republic under the protection of that country.

"Before proceeding further, gentlemen," said Colonel Ellis, as he rose with his written scheme in his hand, "I propose, for present secrecy and future success, that we, who are here assembled, subscribe to a pledge in which we shall bind ourselves to keep our own council, and to work without ceasing until our purpose is accomplished. Does this meet with your approval?"

"Ay! Ay! Ay!" burst from every man in the room.

"Then let every man rise, lift his right hand, give his own name, then repeat after me."

Every man rose and raised his right hand, and the expression on the strong, bearded faces showed that they did not regard this act as a theatrical ceremony.

"I, Norman Ellis."

Every man solemnly repeated his own name.

"Of my own free will and accord."

"Of my own free will and accord."

"And in the presence of Almighty God and these witnesses, do solemnly swear that I will never divulge, to one not authorized to receive the same, the names, acts or purposes of this, the Patriotic Council of Hawaii. And, believing that our liberties, if not our property and lives, are threatened by the arbitrary, unconstitutional and barbarous conduct of the Queen, I hereby solemnly pledge myself to use all my best efforts to depose her, by mild means if possible, but by force if need be. And I further promise and swear that I will freely and

promptly obey the orders of the Council, without regard to my own loss of money or time, and that I will do all in my power to protect the rights of the weakest and humblest citizen of Hawaii as well as if they were my own. To all this I pledge my honor as a man and a citizen. So help me God, and enable me to do unto others as I would that they should do unto me!"

A solemn silence followed the conclusion of this oath. Each felt that while it had not strengthened his personal purpose it united him more closely to men whose interests were common with his own.

Although the law might call these men "conspirators," yet there was nothing of the conspirator in their looks or purposes, nor could even the most prejudiced doubt the sincerity of their intentions.

Colonel Ellis, who was a natural born leader, set the example he would have the others follow by grasping the hand of the man nearest to him; and so hands were grasped, till the thirty-five men present formed a living chain about the long table in the center of the room.

After this there was less restraint, and men who had scarcely dared to whisper their hopes or fears became free and outspoken in giving them expression.

Among the Americans present was a handsome young man, Arthur Loring, a graduate of West Point, who had recently resigned from the army in order to take charge of a large sugar plantation owned in Hawaii by his father, a Boston merchant.

So far, Captain Loring, who, like most trained soldiers, was not a fluent talker, remained silent. Colonel Ellis had just been elected chairman of the Council, an act that made him President of the Provisional Government, then and there established. when Captain Loring

rose to his feet, and, with more embarrassment of manner than he would have shown if ordered to charge a battery, he saluted the chair, and said:

“While I am sure that nothing that has transpired in this Council, or that may transpire at its subsequent consultations, will ever be made public by one of us till the occasion for secrecy is past, yet we should not lose sight of the fact that the spies of the Queen and her adherents swarm in Honolulu, and where they do not know things they will surmise the worst. While I cannot speak with absolute certainty, yet I feel as sure as a man can in my position that it is at this moment known at the palace that we are here, and our purpose will be understood. Alone, the Queen has neither the force nor the ability to assert herself as she is ambitious to do; but she is not lacking in advisers who make up for her deficiencies. Be assured that the instant she is certain that we will resist this new and illegal Constitution she will not hesitate to enforce it by every means at her disposal. Her army is barely fifty strong; but there are five thousand native men who stand ready to do her bidding to the death, and in the arsenal in this city there are arms for a large force of troops. If the adherents of the Queen get possession of the arsenal—and they may be in that position before another sun rises—every man opposed to her will be arrested or be forced to flight, or to seek the protection of the warships in the harbor. Therefore, my friends, as a matter of prudence we should organize a military force at once, seize the arsenal and disarm all the Queen’s troops. If in this work I can be of any service, as a private in the ranks or an officer, command me to the death.”

This sensible and spirited speech was received with

applause. It suggested more than a theory. In it the Council saw a tangible something that could be carried into effect at once; and, while it implied force, which even the boldest was anxious to avoid, the most timid realized that it was only by a show of force that the Queen could be intimidated and bloodshed averted.

With the promptness of earnest men who had a great deal to do and a short time to do it in, the skeleton of a military organization was at once formed, the command of the Provisional regiment being given by acclamation to Captain Loring, who, from that minute on, was addressed as "colonel," and so we shall give him his Hawaiian rank.

Colonel Loring was quite right when he declared that this meeting at the hotel was known at the palace, with the names of all who attended.

Queen Liliuokalani, like most of the sovereigns in the world to-day, would not be considered above the mass in intellect, if she was of the mass; but she had the cunning that is a good substitute for mental ability, and then the adulation paid her because of her position gave her an exalted idea of her own abilities, and led her to transcend her prerogatives in the direction of affairs.

With good educational advantages, the Queen is not even fairly well educated. Brought up amid Christian influences and surroundings, she has chosen to ignore religion by holding aloof from it, and so giving her enemies a basis for the rumor that she has gone back to the bloody orgies and festishes of her forefathers. But be that as it may, certain it is that she had come to regard the beautiful islands of Hawaii as her own exclusive property, on which foreigners could only live

by her sufferance; and this she had made up her mind not to continue.

If the Queen, like Kohala, had been moved to effort by the high resolve of elevating her people instead of aggrandizing herself, she might have ranked as a wise ruler, and even the most ardent advocate of a republic would never have dreamed of revolution while she reigned. But she began in error, and tried to justify her blunders by additional folly.

Even while Colonel Loring was talking at the Hawaiian Hotel and an army was being formed to depose her the Queen, with a few white men and many native adherents about her, was discussing, in her own private apartments, the purpose of the white men's meeting.

From time to time a native messenger came into the Queen's presence, bearing the name of the last arrival at the room of the Council in the Hawaiian Hotel.

One of the Queen's ministers was an American named Eli Porter, or, rather, he had been an American, but now he was a citizen of Hawaii. He was a man of wealth, and he was further bound to the islands and Her Majesty by his marriage with her cousin, a full-blooded native. To this man the Queen now looked for advice. News of the breaking up of the Council had just come in, and Her Majesty turned to Mr. Porter, in whose abilities and fidelity she had all faith, to surmise what had been done.

"I can tell," said Mr. Porter, with an assurance that carried conviction, "exactly what these men have done."

"Then ease my doubts by telling me without questioning," said the Queen, her dark face twitching with excitement.

"They are planning to depose Your Majesty; but to do

that with success, they must either organize an army at once or declare their fears and ask for the protection of the American warships now here. Your Majesty has only sixty armed soldiers, the palace guards, and these can soon be overpowered; but, by acting promptly, we can soon have Honolulu swarming with your defenders."

Seeing that her minister paused for her comment on this, the Queen asked:

"How can this be done?"

"There are arms for five thousand men in Your Majesty's arsenal, and there are five thousand Hawaiians ready to seize them, if you give the order."

"I do give the order!" she said, impetuously.

"Then I shall have the guards seize the arsenal at once," and, in his eagerness, Porter rose to his feet as if he were about to carry out this purpose immediately; but he stopped as if struck by another thought, and began stroking his chin.

"What detains you?" asked the Queen, impatiently.

"Another matter of equal importance, Your Majesty," said Porter.

"What is it?"

"Kohala."

"What of him?"

"The revolutionists, as Your Majesty knows, are imposing on many of your people by declaring that this young man, as a direct descendant of King Kamehameha, is the rightful heir to the throne, and Kohala helps the imposition by a strong belief in his own claims."

"He is a fool!" she said, angrily.

"No doubt; but he can become a very dangerous one to our cause. He is, as Your Majesty knows, an outspoken republican, yet he could be made to compromise

with his convictions by permitting himself to be made president for life."

"What folly!" said Her Majesty, with a shrug of her broad shoulders.

"Not such folly, if their plans carry."

"What plans?"

"Why, the principal plan is that Kohala shall at once marry Leila, daughter of Keona of Hawaii. The two, as Your Majesty may remember, were betrothed when they were children, and, although Kohala has seen much of the world since then, and so may have no love for the daughter of the chief, yet his love for the people of these islands is so strong that it is firmly believed he can be made to do anything that promises a realization of his rather romantic dreams. But in Kohala himself I see no danger."

"Where, then, does it lie?"

"In his marriage with Leila. Not even Your Majesty has more influence over the people of Hawaii than Keona. He, as you well know, has never been your friend. If his daughter becomes the wife of Kohala he will have a double reason for opposing you—his personal hate and his family pride. Your Majesty's husband was a white man, and, as you know, the people never liked it. With the daughter of a chief for his wife, Kohala can appeal to the pride of the natives, and they will flock to his support. And, let me add, the Americans, nearly all of whom are Your Majesty's enemies, strongly favor this marriage."

"But, Mr. Porter," said the Queen, with a compression of the very full lips, "how would you stop it?"

"There are two ways of doing it," replied Porter.

"What are they?"

Speaking very slowly, and looking down at a paper held in his hand as if he saw the words there, Porter said:

"Sovereigns with devoted subjects have never had much trouble in getting rid of a rival—of the rival he met at the start."

"I do not quite understand; but let that go. What is the second way of making this young man harmless?" and the Queen half closed her eyes and looked up at the ceiling.

"I would marry him to a white woman at once."

"But what good would that do?"

"It would array Keona and all the natives against him."

"You think so?"

"I am sure of it."

"But would they come to my side?"

"They might. Again, by marrying such a woman, he would alienate the Americans."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Queen, and she brought her fat palms together with a smack, "that is what we want. We must alienate the Americans from him; would that we could banish them from Hawaii at the same time."

CHAPTER V.

MRS. HOLMES IN A QUANDARY.

MARGUERITE HOLMES was much talked about in Honolulu. She was a woman who would attract attention wherever she went, yet it could not be said with truth

that she courted notoriety; it came to her. She impressed one at first as being shrinking, if not reserved, still she soon became a center of attraction, particularly to elderly men, over whom she seemed to exercise a peculiar fascination.

Young men did not take kindly to her, though when she chose to exercise her remarkable powers she could, as we have seen in the case of Kohala and Captain Featherstone, bring them to her feet.

When at home Mrs. Holmes occupied her time in writing or in arranging her own dresses; the latter never followed the lines of fashion, but were cut and draped with an eye to her own figure and complexion; and the consequence was that, with the simplest materials, she always managed to look the best and the most tastefully dressed woman in any gathering where she was a guest.

When not animated in conversation Mrs. Holmes's face seemed pinched and wan, and the long-lashed eyes had in them a sorrowing, introverted expression that made her look older than the years she claimed.

She was bending over her sewing to-night in a little bow-windowed apartment that was half boudoir, half sitting-room, when the angular and taciturn Clem entered, and said:

"Captain Featherstone, mem."

"Show him in, Clem," said Mrs. Holmes.

On the instant the expression of age and heart-torture vanished, and the childlike light of innocence and expectancy came into the remarkable eyes.

"I hardly expected you to-night, captain," she said, as, without rising, she extended to him her left hand. The right still held the needle and the sewing was on her lap.

"Nor would I have disturbed you again, Flossy, if it were not that I am in trouble," said Featherstone.

"In trouble?" she echoed.

"Yes."

"But I hope not in danger?"

"Every suspected man and woman in Honolulu to-night is in danger; but men who play for large stakes must take some risks." Then, as if putting himself aside, he asked: "When have you seen Kohala?"

"To-day."

"He came here?"

"He did."

"And how did he seem?"

"Much worried. He told me that he must leave to-morrow for Hilo."

"For Hilo?"

"Yes. There is to be a meeting of all the native opponents of the Queen in a great cave near the lake of fire, where, for centuries, the chiefs of Hawaii have assembled whenever there was danger. The message has come to him through Keona, a powerful chief on that island. He says that, for the sake of the people whom he so loves, he dare not disobey. Ah! I fear there is going to be trouble—bloodshed!" cried Marguerite, and she interlocked her thin fingers above her sewing and looked imploringly at the captain, as if asking him to allay her fears.

"Do you fear for yourself?" asked Featherstone.

"No; I am not a coward," she said, with spirit.

"Then you fear for him?"

"Why should I not fear for him? Can any woman with a heart remain indifferent to the man who pays her the

greatest compliment it is possible for man to pay? I would do much to help him and to save him."

"Pardon me, Flossy. You are quite right. I am apt to forget my true mission here in my love for you. But, tell me, does he still persist on an immediate marriage?"

"He does."

"And your answer?"

"I have obeyed your instructions. I will not promise to be his wife till he becomes the king of Hawaii and makes England an ally. This, I told him, will prove that his love for me, while a private citizen, has not been changed by his becoming a king."

"Ah! Flossy, you are a natural born diplomat," said Featherstone, admiringly. He was about to continue, when Clem rapped at the door—something she never did when her mistress was alone—and entered before she heard a response.

"A lady, mem," said Clem, and she handed Mrs. Holmes a card, then withdrew to the door, which she held ajar.

"Mercy!" exclaimed Marguerite, and the card trembled in her hand. "It is the Queen! She must not see you here!"

"But I cannot get out without seeing her!" cried Featherstone, and he rose to his feet and looked about him.

"Quick! there is a closet!" Mrs. Holmes pointed to a door behind her, and on the instant Featherstone vanished.

She rose, put away her sewing, glanced at her face in the mirror, adjusted the violet blossoms at her throat and went out to meet her visitor.

Although heavily veiled, no one familiar with the figure of the Queen could be mistaken as to her identity. She had left her carriage in a street near by and come to this cottage alone and on foot.

Bending down and kissing the little Englishwoman on the cheek, the Queen whispered:

“My dear, take me where we can talk without being disturbed. Here, your boudoir will suit,” and before Mrs. Holmes, who was about to suggest the bedroom, could respond Her Majesty led the way, for this was not her first visit.

“Are you sure we can talk here without being observed?” asked the Queen, as she dropped into a large wicker chair and wiped her face.

“Ye—yes; we can talk here in safety,” replied Mrs. Holmes, with the slightest tremor in her low, sweet voice.

“I am in trouble—in sore trouble,” began Her Majesty. “I am surrounded by enemies, men to whom I and my ancestors have given a home and a welcome, and scarce knowing where to turn for a friend whom I can trust, I have come to you, for you, at least, are true, and you, more than any one in Honolulu, can help me.”

“I am Your Majesty’s to command,” said Marguerite, with a self-deprecating shake of the head; “but I am so weak and helpless that I cannot see how I can be of service to any one, much less to the good Queen of Hawaii.”

“You will be entirely frank with me?”

“Surely, Your Majesty.”

“Do you love Kohala?” and the Queen straightened up and fastened her big black eyes on the little widow.

"I am not indifferent to Kohala," replied Marguerite, and she looked down on her thin interlocked fingers, as was her habit when particularly serious. "But," she continued, "I cannot forget that I am only recently a widow, and that I am not as yet physically strong."

"But Kohala is rich."

"That would be no inducement to me."

"And he is handsome."

"I concede that."

"And well educated, though I think you white people give too much importance to mere learning. But there is one thing a woman values more than wealth, beauty or education."

"What is that, Your Majesty?"

"Love! The young man loves you."

"I am afraid he does."

"And by that chain of love you can lead him where you will. Are you ready to do it to help me?"

"Your Majesty, my mind is dull to-night and my heart is heavy; I do not understand," said Marguerite, appealingly.

"Then I shall be plainer." The Queen drew her chair nearer, and, sinking her voice to a whisper that seemed masculine in its hoarseness, she continued: "If you marry Kohala at once it can be kept secret till such time as you choose to disclose it. I will see to it that he leaves immediately after the ceremony, which can take place to-morrow morning at the palace, and there you can remain under my protection—the protection of a loving mother—so long as you are content with such a friend and such a home. Wait, do not stop me. I am not rich, but I command wealth and power. Do as I ask you, and there will be nothing in my gift to grant for which you

will need to ask a second time. Now, what say you, my precious friend?"

"It is so—so sudden," said Mrs. Holmes, her eyes still on the interlocked fingers.

"But I cannot wait. I must have your answer to-night; at once!" and the Queen rose and towered above the little widow like a gigantic silhouette.

"But I must have the night to consider," said Marguerite, with an upward glance at the full, swarthy face of the Queen.

"This night?"

"Yes, this night."

"And your answer will be ready in the morning?"

"It will."

"And you will fetch it to the palace?"

"If Your Majesty desires it."

"I do desire it. I shall see you not later than nine o'clock?"

"If Your Majesty so orders."

"No. I so request. I never order those whom I love."

Marguerite, following her guest's example, rose, and, on the instant, the big, strong arms were about her little neck, and the Queen, after kissing her on both cheeks, withdrew.

"Well!" exclaimed Featherstone, as he emerged from the closet, "I am glad she has gone, and I am equally glad that I had an opportunity to hear her proposition."

"And I am sorry that you have heard it. I do not like the idea of playing traitor," said Marguerite, the pinched, weary expression again coming into the childish, irresolute face.

"And what are you going to do?"

She raised her hands to her face, let them fall helplessly, and half sobbed :

"I do not know. I have been following your instructions. You are a man, and strong; I am a woman, and weak. What do you advise?"

"You cannot permit an actual marriage—for my sake."

"And yet you are willing that I should pretend to an illegal marriage so that you can hold this man to your purpose and eventually marry me yourself; is not that it?"

"That is exactly it. It is in our power, through Kohala and his followers, to make Hawaii an English colony, the property of the British crown. If we win—and I am sure we can—it means a fortune for you and me. One hundred thousand pounds will be the reward of our success. With such a fortune and with such a wife, I shall be the happiest man in the world."

"But what must I do?" she asked.

"I have already told you. You must get him to issue a proclamation, calling on the Hawaiians to sustain him as their legal king, and to depose the Queen as a pretender. Such an act on his part will give England her opportunity; we shall then have a majority of the natives behind us, and the rest will be easy. Indeed, after the deposition of the Queen and the crowning of Kohala, it would be better for my purpose if the gilded young savage were found dead in his bed some fine morning—an event not at all impossible in such a community as this. The adherents of the Queen could be hired for such work, or, if not, it would be an easy matter to place the taking off of the young man at their doors."

"Don't, don't talk in that way," she said, with a shudder. "The thought of blood makes me faint."

"Then I shall not refer to it again. You look weary, and need rest. Go to bed, and in the morning call on Her Majesty. Agree to anything and everything but the actual performance of the marriage ceremony with Kohala. I can see, if you do not, exactly why the Queen is so eager to have you Kohala's wife. Now, good-night and pleasant dreams, little girl."

Featherstone drew her to his side, brought her passive head to his broad breast and kissed her. But even after he withdrew she stood for some minutes as if in a trance, and the lines about her eyes and mouth were as those of an old woman.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INFERNO OF HAWAII.

IN the southeast corner of the great island of Hawaii, after which the whole group of islands is named, there is the most wonderful if not the most famous volcano in the world—Kilauea—pronounced Kil-awe-ee-ah. It is a vast lake of fire far up among the clouds, and on its scorching shores the molten waves break at times like the phosphorescent rollers over the coral reefs that encircle the island.

The sun had dropped behind great banks of flaming clouds, that looked as if they had caught in their huge folds the reflection of the mighty crater, when bands of natives could be seen coming up from Hilo and the many emerald valleys about to the blistering sconia banks that surrounded the surging lake of fire.

Although the Hawaiians ordinarily dress like the Americans of their class, on this occasion each man and woman wore the picturesque native costume. The men carried spears tipped with the serrated teeth of the shark, and their helmets were decorated with the bright plumage of paroquettes. They wore sandals with shark-hide soles, and their oval shields, ornamented with iridescent shells, were of the same tough material.

As is their custom when they meet to practice the ancient rites, which all the pleadings of the missionaries have not induced them wholly to relinquish, the women wore robes of colored grass, of the shape and woven in the patterns of the Scottish kilt. The raven hair, hanging loose down their shoulders, looked blacker in contrast with the crimson blossoms with which it was intertwined, while great wreaths of wildflowers took the place of jackets about the bronzed necks and shoulders.

As the young women advanced, they sang, as if unmindful of the steep ascent, and formed a body-guard about one who seemed to be the youngest and most beautiful, as she surely was the most honored, of the troop. This was Leila, daughter of Keona, the hereditary chief of the great island of Hawaii. Leila looked beautiful when seen in evening-dress at the last ball given by the Queen in Honolulu; but in her native attire she appeared far more radiant and captivating, nor was this costume a greater strain on her innate modesty.

The inner rim of the great crater is honeycombed with volcanic caves. Some of these, particularly near the sea of fire, are of recent origin, and are continually changing their forms, or are being destroyed and replaced by others equally weird and fantastic. Near the outer rim of the crater, at certain points, there are igneous caverns

of great extent that have not changed materially since the days of which tradition tells, when the whole island was for a time one vast cone of fire, whose heaven-reaching torch dimmed the splendor of the cloudless sun at high noon.

Time out of mind one of these ancient caverns, that might have served as a chamber for Vulcan, has been used as a council chamber by the chiefs of Hawaii. Here the great Kamehameha announced his purpose to his warriors before he began the campaign that resulted in subduing all the islands to his sway. Here the chiefs of Hawaii had been married since long before the coming of Captain Cook, and here the Chief Keona had met his followers in council when the increasing aggressions of the white men or the imbecility and vices of their own rulers threatened the liberties of the people.

Keona of Hawaii was a man in the prime of life, tall and finely formed, as are ever the high-class natives, and with a bearing and physiognomy that denoted unusual strength and activity and the heaven-given power to command.

Keona, seated on a lava block, that looked like a Titan's throne by the light of the many shell lamps that illuminated the cave, was dressed in the barbaric but becoming feather robes of gold-bronze, such as his warlike ancestors ever wore in council. About him were fivescore or more men, all carrying spears and shields, and all showing by the serious expression on their swarthy faces that business of unusual importance was to be transacted to-night.

The chief and his followers were talking in low, earnest tones when, suddenly, like music from the sky, that was re-echoed with thrilling effect in the depths of the

cavern, the song of the Hawaiian maidens could be heard, and then the men became silent—

“Fringing with crimson crest
Those watch-towers of the west,
Which lift their cold, gray battlements on high,
The monarch of the day
Veils his last lingering ray,
And sinks to rest o'er far-off Waianæ.

“No sound is on the shore
Save reef-bound breakers' roar,
Or distant boatsman's song, or seabird's cry;
And hushed the inland bay
In stillness, far away
Like phantoms rise the hills of Waianæ.

“Ghosts of each act and thought
Which the dead day has wrought,
The misty twilight shadows silent fly
To burial, 'neath the pall
Of 'past' beyond recall,
Which falls with night o'er silent Waianæ.”

With Leila in their midst, the girls advanced through the open ranks, and when within twenty feet of him Keona descended and led his daughter to a seat by his side. This appeared to be a signal, for at once the women began a song that had to it a more martial ring, and to its stirring measure the warriors kept perfect time by beating their spears against their resonant shields.

The last notes of this song were still echoing down the cavern when a series of shrill cries, that might well have alarmed people not expecting them, came from the profound and stygian depths beyond.

Neither the chief nor those about him seemed startled, nor turned in the direction of the sound as it came nearer

and swelled out in shriller and more piercing notes. At length, a band of three old men and three old women, dressed in robes of rattling reeds, and with huge gray wigs of dried seaweeds on their heads, appeared before the chief and his daughter, and prostrated themselves at his feet, and so remained till he told them to rise.

These were the Kahinas, or sorcerers of the island, people with prophetic powers who could pierce the veil of the future and tell all that was to be, though their prophecies, like those of the oracles of an older and more cultured people, were invariably enigmatical, and were capable of the most opposite interpretations.

One of these Kahinas was a man who looked to be older, as he certainly was more hideous, than any of his companions. He stood closer to the chief than the others, as became the rank of the oldest priest on all the islands. Addressing him, Keona asked :

“Can Helna tell us why tarries our king?”

“We have no king, alas!” replied the old man, and he emphasized the exclamation by raising his long wand and letting the end fall to the rocky floor with a metallic ring, an example followed, like a chorus, by the other Kahinas.

“But Hawaii shall soon have a king!” said Keona.

“We shall soon have a king!” shouted the warriors, and the girls threw back their long black tresses, and chanted :

“We shall soon have a king!”

“Where is Kohala?” asked the chief.

“He is here,” said Helna.

The old sorcerer raised to his lips a shell bugle, which he carried fastened to his girdle, and blew a long, shrill blast, that went echoing down through the cave as if a

thousand mystic buglers were prolonging the notes, with an ever-decreasing force, in the far-off depths.

A brief silence, then the quick fall of hurrying feet could be heard coming up as if from lower depths. Nearer and nearer came the tramping, then a song of triumph burst from the lips of unseen men. A flash of flambeaux banished the stygian blackness behind. Then men came to view, shaking their torches till the place seemed filled with a rain of fire. These people were dressed as warriors, and in their midst, with a corona of crimson feathers on his head and a yellow mantle that flashed like gold over his shoulders, was Kohala, the sole descendant of the great King Kamehameha, who, in this very chamber, had begun his career of triumph.

When Leila saw the young man the color deepened on her olive cheeks, and she would have risen as her father had done had he not bent over her and whispered:

"She who is to be the Queen of Hawaii need not rise in any presence."

At sight of the youth whom they regarded as their rightful king the men broke into a cheer, or, rather, a long, shrill shout, that resembled the cries of startled eagles.

Keona descended from the seat, and, catching Kohala to his breast, he kissed him on both cheeks, and, still holding him in his strong embrace, he turned his face to the people and cried out:

"I told you that one day I should show you your king. Behold! Kohala, from wandering through all lands, has come back to Hawaii, the home of his heart, and he will leave us never again."

Again the cheering broke out, the spears were beaten against the shields and the torch-bearers shook their brands till all seemed deluged in a golden rain.

"I am not the king of Hawaii, but I am better: I am a Hawaiian, who loves his home and his people, and who is ready, if need be, to lay down his life for both," said Kohala, in a voice that all could hear, while the warmth of his reception and the barbaric surroundings stirred in his heart the latent spirit of his ancestors, and brought the blood in darker waves to his cheeks and kindled a heroic light in the great black eyes.

The young man bowed to Leila, whom he now saw for the first time since his entrance, and the look of sudden and transitory pain that flitted over his handsome face may have passed unnoticed by others, but it did not escape the keen gaze of the old sorcerer, Helna.

Yielding to the many arms that fairly lifted him up, Kohala stood before Leila, kissed her hand with the gallantry of a medieval knight, and then, in obedience to the request—it seemed like a command—of Keona, he sat down beside the beautiful girl.

"When Kohala weds Leila, the daughter of Keona of Hawaii, then shall he be crowned and placed on the throne now disgraced by her who calls herself 'Queen' at Honolulu!" called out Helna, who felt that he might venture on that prophecy with perfect safety.

And to the people who heard him, and who all believed the same thing before he had spoken, Helna was more than ever the most wonderful Kahina Hawaii had ever seen.

"We have met to-night," said Keona, addressing himself to Kohala and to his eager-faced followers, "not to see the wedding of a prince nor the crowning of a

king—though they will speedily follow to-night's work—but to welcome him who is to be our ruler, and to see him, as we now do, seated beside her to whom he was betrothed when a boy and while yet his father lived. I have heard wild stories about Kohala's admiration for women whose skins are whiter than is Leila's of Hawaii; but it troubles me not, for I knew that the son of such a father could never break his father's word. To-night we would learn the plans of Kohala, assuring him that with our lives we stand ready to carry them out."

CHAPTER VII.

LOVE OR PATRIOTISM—WHICH?

THE men and the maidens and the weird Kahinas gathered about the volcanic throne on which Kohala and Leila were seated thought, nor took pains to hide their thoughts, that they had never seen two such beautiful young people before.

The bronzed cheeks of Keona were aglow, and the fire of pride and triumph burned in his keen black eyes, for the act on which all his hopes centered since the birth of his daughter was soon to be consummated. Nor was it paternal ambition alone that moved him. At heart, he was a patriot. Too circumscribed in his environment to look upon all men as his brothers, all the love of his strong nature was concentrated on his own people; and, to make them free and independent, he would have seen with delight the last white man dead or banished from Hawaii.

"Friends and a feast await us by the shore!" called

out the old priest, Helna. "Let our king make his pledge before all the chiefs ere we leave this the sacred temple of Hawaii."

At a signal from the old Kahina, Kohala rose, and Leila, in obedience to her father's gesture, did the same.

"Kohala, son of the conqueror," said Helna, in a low, solemn voice, while Keona and all the people crossed their hands on their breasts and bowed their heads, "are you ready to keep the vows your father made to all our people in your behalf?"

The young man hesitated, and swallowed an invisible lump. He cast a quick, nervous glance at the beautiful girl by his side, then said, with an effort and in a voice that seemed strange to himself:

"I am."

"Then you have not been changed by living in the land of the whites?" said Helna.

"My love for Hawaii and for the people of my race has grown stronger," said Kohala, with more confidence. "Yet am I changed from a simple-minded boy to a man who has learned the secret of the white man's power, and who is ready to use that knowledge for the good of his own people."

A murmur of approval went up from the groups about the great volcanic rock on which Kohala stood, and the men raised their faces.

"Our people look to you to bring them light in this the day of their great doubt and darkness; are you ready?"

"I am."

"And you will marry Leila, the pearl of Hawaii, and wrest from the impostor the throne of your fathers?" said Helna.

It was well for Kohala that this was a double question. His was not a nature to be indifferent to the rare advantages of the beautiful girl by his side. He knew and felt that in every physical grace she was not only the peer, but vastly the superior of the white woman who had gained such an irresistible mastery over his heart; yet the full knowledge of this fact intensified rather than weakened his love for Marguerite Holmes.

Hawaii, with the woman of his heart, would be heaven; without her, any and every condition would be torture. He realized his own helplessness. He felt that his love was a chain bearing him down and weakening his manhood at the very time when he needed more strength; yet he would not have forgotten his idol if he could, nor have been free from her magic spell if in his power.

Keeping in mind the last of the old Kahina's questions, Kohala replied:

"I believe in rulers chosen by the people who are to be ruled; but my life among the whites has given me a contempt for kings who claim that the gods have chosen them for such a mission. The Queen of Hawaii is not the choice of our people. She regards the throne as her private property, so that if she were, as I am, the descendant of the great King Kamehameha, still should I oppose her, still should I demand that she do right by yielding what she was wrong in accepting. So sure am I that the people should elect their own rulers that I will not insist on my claims that are just as a birthright. The people of Hawaii, the people of our race, who are the rightful owners of the land, must by their votes say who it is they want to have rule over them, and if it be another than myself I will show my faith in my own

counsel by yielding the earliest and most continued obedience.”

Keona and his daughter, of all the people present, were the only ones who fully comprehended Kohala's reply, and it was evident from the expression of the chief that he did not indorse the views of the regal young republican. He was still moved by the old traditions as to rank; he was himself a chief by right of birth, and a greater right than that was beyond his comprehension. Yet he had the wisdom to see that where the people might be divided as to the choice of a ruler, as they certainly were in Hawaii, that it would add to the security of Kohala's throne if a majority of the people indicated him as their choice.

“It shall be even as Kohala says,” called out the chief. “With the morrow's sun I will dispatch young men who can read and write to all the islands, and they shall find who is the choice of the people. This we shall do to please Kohala, for there can be no doubt as to the result. But when he is our king—and he surely will be—he will hold us the stronger to him the more he ignores the laws and customs of the whites. Our motto must be: ‘A king of our own, and Hawaii for the Hawaiians!’ ”

This was said with a fire and an energy that were contagious, and when the chief turned to the faces of the people about him he saw a new light in the eyes of the men, who gave expression to their approval in a cheer that echoed down the cavern depths for fully a minute after.

“Kohala will give his heart to the wishes of his people; that we know, and that the people believe, and so will they give him their faith, and, if need be, their lives.

We shall know all when the next full moon rises over Hawaii; then we shall meet here to greet the king and his queen, and our boats will be ready to take them, as befits their rank, to the palace at Honolulu. Now let us descend to the shore where other friends await us with a feast."

So spoke Helna, who, in addition to his priestly duties, acted as master of ceremonies to the great chief Keona, to whom he was warmly attached.

Fresh torches were lit, and the Kahinas took the advance; then came the girls, with Leila in their midst, while the men with spears formed in advance of and to the rear of the chief and Kohala; and so the procession went down to the shore, but not as the people had come.

By a descent, sometimes steep, and again as smooth and hard and glistening as a floor of polished steel, the Kahinas led the way through the rocky cavern. The torches flashed on black side chambers, like cells set in the walls of a mighty prison, or they turned to blood the subterranean streams that crossed or ran along their course.

The way was familiar to every person but Kohala, who had not visited the cavern since he was a child of seven, and then it was to be betrothed to the infant daughter of the chief.

It was well that etiquette required the young man to keep silent as he went down through the sacred, black depths, for his heart was anxious and full, but not with the cares of Hawaii.

At length from the far front there came the dull booming, as of distant guns, accompanied by a ceaseless roar that might have shook steadier nerves than those of the Hawaiians had they not known that the booming

was caused by the fall of the breakers on the barrier reef and the roar by the ceaseless flow and recession of the waves on the shell-lined shore.

The exit from the cave was guarded by a regiment of plume-crowned palms, over which the moon, now at its full, poured a peaceful, silvery light that added to the calm grandeur of the scene.

As soon as the procession came into the light the men to the rear sent up a long, shrill shout, that was answered by another and a more prolonged shout by men in the direction of the shore, along which a number of fires, like blazing fountains, sent plumes of flame into the sky.

Then the companions of Leila began to sing:

“Hail to the king and his bride,
Men of the hills and the sea,
Kohala has come from the white land
To the green vales of fair Hawaii.”

Fully two thousand men and women were gathered about the fires on the shore, and the swarms of outrigger canoes drawn up on the beach told how a majority of the people must have come.

They had prepared a great feast in honor of the king, for such they now regarded Kohala. Meats and fish, vegetables and fruit, and the national dish, “poi,” all crowned with flowers, as were the lithe maidens who served the banquet, found sharp appetites to appreciate them; but the honored guest—and, it may be, Leila—were the only persons present who did not enjoy the feast.

Finely woven mats, spread on the ground and bordered by flowers, served as tables; and tea was handed round

in fancifully carved cocoanut-shells. It was a native banquet, plus many things unknown till the coming of the whites.

The eating was accompanied with songs and shouts of laughter, and many of the jests directed by the girls at Leila were so personal, though invariably pleasant, that the beautiful girl was kept in a state of blushing agitation.

As soon as the feast was over the older men lit their pipes and drew back some distance so as to leave a wide, open space between them and the fires. Back of these the young men stood up with their shields on their left arms and their right hands grasping their spears about the center.

Kohala and Keona, with Leila between them, sat on a raised seat that looked like a bank of gorgeous flowers, and back of them were brilliant groups of women, all blossom-crowned and all showing by their display of white teeth and flashing black eyes their intense enjoyment of the occasion.

In Hawaii, as in all the Pacific Islands to the south, dancing is a part of every religious and festal gathering. It is said that Samra and New Zealand were colonized by the Hawaiians. The language, folk-lore and customs common to all would indicate a common ancestry; but, be that as it may, the dancing of the "hoola" girls, as the young women skilled in the graceful art are called, is as popular in Hawaii to-day as it was when the natives welcomed and entertained Captain Cook more than a century ago.

As soon as the space was cleared before the great central fire a band of twoscore girls, crowned and draped with flowers till they resembled animated bouquets,

sprang with airy grace into the opening, saluted Kohala and the chief, and then, at a signal given by the clapping of the leader's hands, the wonderful dance began.

The music was supplied by the singing of a group of women seated on the ground, and the changes in the graceful mazes were made to the rhythmic beating of the spears on the shields.

In addition to being an exquisite dance, such as would have made the fame and fortune of the *maitre de ballet* who could have produced it on the stage, this was also a most expressive pantomime. The ardor of the lover and the coyness of the maiden were pictured with an excellence and delicacy that amounted to art. The jealousy of rivals, the opposition of friends, the secret meetings, the agony of parting, and then the elopement, the capture, the reconciliation and the marriage, were all depicted in a way that could not have been made more poetic and dramatic by the use of words.

Leila gradually lost her self-consciousness and became enraptured with the scene. The pearly teeth flashed through the parted carnation of her lips. Her long-lashed black eyes were aglow, and, forgetting herself in the excitement of the occasion, she added her voice to those of the singing women at her feet.

Now and then she shot a glance at the face of the young man seated by her side, and she wondered that he could be so cold and impassive amid such a glow of joyous excitement. How could she know that his thoughts were with his heart in the cottage of the white woman at Honolulu?

CHAPTER VIII.

OPENING THE EYES OF LOVE.

COLONEL ELLIS had been a resident of Hawaii since the close of the great war in his own land. His forethought and energy had made him rich; but while this was the purpose of his voluntary exile, he regarded as his own the rights of the natives of Hawaii.

The indifference of the Queen to the moral standards that prevail in cultured communities, her weakness in yielding to the influence of selfish favorites and her fierce defiance of the constitutional restraints that environed the throne were seen and their consequences appreciated by Colonel Ellis before others, who were equally involved in the consequences, dreamed of their danger.

It was Colonel Ellis who induced Kohala to spend six years at school in America and Europe. It was Colonel Ellis who cared for the young man's estates and made them as productive and profitable as his own; and it was the colonel who early instilled into the mind of the youth those principles of republicanism that gave him such a contempt for hereditary rulers.

Colonel Ellis and the men associated with him had fully resolved to check the mad course of the Queen by making vacant the throne; but they had the wisdom to see that a native figure of some kind must be kept on or near that ornamental seat, so as to appease the feelings of the Hawaiians.

With Kohala in power, Colonel Ellis saw that Hawaii

would be practically republican, and that he could, through the influence of this young man, bring the natives to his way of thinking, and in time make real his dream of annexation to the land from which he had himself been so long an exile.

It had been decided by the Americans that if the marriage of Kohala could be made to play a part in the drama now on the stage at Honolulu it would be good diplomacy and sound statesmanship to have him marry the Princess Kaiulani, then at school in England, and whom Queen Liliuokalani had selected to succeed herself on the throne.

There appeared to be one thing on which all the friends and foes of Kohala were agreed, and that was that he would serve their purpose better by marrying some one at once.

As we have seen, the natives who opposed the Queen and who were led by Keona, regarded his marriage with Leila, the daughter of the chief of Hawaii, as practically settled. Many of the Americans were anxious, for reasons of State policy, that he should marry the half-bred schoolgirl Kaiulani, who must come at once from England for that purpose, though they would not seriously object to Leila.

The Queen was resolved that Kohala should marry the Englishwoman, Marguerite Holmes, for she well knew that such a course would mean his own political suicide, and hers was the one scheme that entirely met the young man's approval.

The English were not so much interested in the young man's marriage as that he should be induced to raise the banner of revolt and declare himself king, when their Government could step in as a peacemaker between the

rivals, and, seizing the islands till the quarrel could be adjusted, see to it that it never was adjusted and the hold never released.

Among all these diverse factions the English, though working quietly and out of sight, stood the best chance of success, for they had enlisted on their side Marguerite Holmes, the one person to whose will and wishes Kohala, since their first meeting, had ever yielded implicit obedience.

Colonel Ellis was not the man to win a point at the expense of a good woman's character; but, like all manly, honest men, he loathed, above all things, that unsexed creature—the woman adventurer. He believed, from the moment he first heard of her, that Marguerite Holmes was of this character, and he resolved to expose her; but in a spirit of fairness he made up his mind, first, to learn for himself what manner of woman she was, and if she were purchasable, as he believed, to make it worth her while to leave the islands quietly and without telling Kohala. If she should refuse to do this, he and his friends must be in a position to open Kohala's eyes so that not even his unreasoning love could blind him to the character of the woman for whose uncertain and wavering affections he had been so ready to barter away his own splendid future and the happiness and prosperity of the Hawaiians whom he so loved.

To carry out his purpose Colonel Ellis secured an introduction to Mrs. Holmes, through his friend, Dr. Wallace, who was well known as one of the little widow's most ardent admirers.

Marguerite Holmes had heard of Colonel Ellis. She knew he was a widower, and the richest man on the

islands; but the fact that he was a man would have been to her sufficient reason for treating him with all consideration, and bringing him under the control of her witchery.

After his introduction, Colonel Ellis asked for leave to call on Mrs. Holmes, and she graciously consented. He was a man of the world, and, withal, a knightly admirer of the sex, and so he saw that to win he must appear to come under her influence, as others had done, yet he was not the man to permit himself to be seriously influenced by a designing woman, such as he believed Mrs. Holmes to be.

He called the day after his introduction, and found Mrs. Holmes dressed in dainty fashion for the street, when she always looked her best. She was delighted to meet him again, and the expression in the long-lashed eyes and the musical voice confirmed her words.

She sat facing him in the little flower-decorated boudoir, and would have discussed the weather and other trite matters in her graceful fashion had not the colonel, with an effort that was evident, come at once to the purpose of his visit.

"Mrs. Holmes," he began, "we are threatened with troublesome times in Hawaii, and you can help to bring them about, or you can do much to prevent them."

"I?" she exclaimed, and she laid her index finger on the rim of her becoming violet bonnet. "Surely you are mistaken, Colonel Ellis. What influence for weal or woe can a poor little nobody like myself have on the affairs of Hawaii?"

"A great deal, Mrs. Holmes," was the serious response.

"But in what way?" she asked, with increasing surprise.

"You will not think me rude if I am entirely frank?"

"I cannot imagine Colonel Ellis being rude."

"Thanks. I certainly do not mean to be. But first, a question or two, which you need not answer if you have anything to conceal."

"A thousand questions, if you will."

"You are an Englishwoman?"

"I am."

"Alone in Honolulu?"

"Yes."

"And you know the man they call Captain Featherstone?"

"I have that honor," she said, more coldly.

"If you are his friend it may be well for you to know that this Captain Featherstone's conduct is not unknown to the men who have the interests of these islands at heart, and that if he persists in his present course he may have to make a sudden and unexpected exit."

"Had you not better communicate this to Captain Featherstone himself?" she asked, with a perceptible tremor of the lips.

"No; when we come to speak to this man we shall be ready to act, and we shall act in no mild way. He is your countryman, and from his visits to you we must believe that he is, at least, your friend, and so the warning must come through you; for, to be candid with you, you are regarded with suspicion," said Colonel Ellis, with the manner of a man anxious to get at the heart of the matter at once.

Marguerite Holmes's face was usually palid; now it grew ashy, and a startled look came into her eyes, yet she managed to retain her composure, as she asked:

"What have I done to excite suspicion?"

"At such times as these everything and every one is apt to excite the suspicion of the anxious. Another question: Do you know the young Hawaiian, Kohala?"

"I do," she replied.

"Very well?"

"I think I can say: Yes, very well."

"And you are his friend?"

"I mean to be."

"And he is your admirer?"

"He has, unfortunately, that bad taste," she said; then, sitting more erect and looking down at her interlocked fingers, incased in dark kid gloves, she added: "But my friends and my likes and dislikes should be my own private affair."

"Ordinarily I should say you were quite right, but it so happens that your friends are people of public prominence in Hawaii, and there is a suspicion—whether well-founded or not I will not pretend to say—that you and this Captain Featherstone are trying to influence Kohala for your own ends. Permit me to say, as one who would come to your rescue if you needed an unselfish friend, that in trying to influence Kohala to become a tool of England's diplomacy you are working for his ruin."

"I working for the ruin of Kohala!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, quite as much as if you were planning his murder," responded Colonel Ellis.

"May I ask in what way?"

"By leading him to believe that you love him and will marry him."

"And pray why should I not love him and marry him if we are both agreed?" she asked, with spirit.

"Ordinarily there could be no opposition to such a

course; but, unfortunately for you, Kohala at this time does not belong to himself, and, unfortunately for him, you are virtually engaged to this adventurer who calls himself Captain Featherstone. I mean no offense. What I say I can prove. For our own protection we Americans have been compelled to search out the antecedents of all who are opposed to us in Hawaii; and I may say that we understand the purpose of yourself and the man with whom you are so unfortunately associated."

Colonel Ellis did not look at her while he was speaking; but as soon as he had concluded he turned his keen gray eyes to her face and saw that she was much excited, though she made a brave effort to appear calm. At length she met his gaze, and said:

"And it is to tell me this that you have come?"

"To tell you this, and much more, for I must not permit gallantry to stand between me and what I believe to be my duty. You can marry Captain Featherstone whenever you please, and no man in Hawaii will dare to question your right; but when you essay to make a tool of Kohala, in whom we all are interested, then for the common safety and the common good we deem it a duty to warn you. I tell you now, this must stop. If you desire to leave Honolulu I will secure you passage on the steamer that leaves here for Australia to-morrow, and I and my friends will see to it that you have means enough to keep traveling the world for years, if you so desire."

The colonel looked at her questioningly. She had now regained her well-bred self-control.

"I do not fear your covert threats," she said, very deliberately. "I am an Englishwoman, and the British

Consul at this port will see that I am guaranteed my rights."

"Go to the British Consul and mention my name. He will assure you that I have no purpose to interfere with the rights of any human being; and he will also tell you that, when in a strange land, his country's flag is powerless to protect you in violating the laws of that land."

"How am I violating the laws?" she asked.

"You are conspiring to overthrow the existing Government, and to bring Hawaii under British control. You are coquetting with a man who may be our ruler tomorrow; but I have proof that as soon as your purpose is accomplished you will leave these islands with Featherstone. There are no walls in the world that have so many ears as those of Honolulu. Now make your choice: go on with your scheme and prepare for the consequences, or quietly take your departure, and thank Heaven you are well out of a bad scrape. I shall not ask you for an answer now, but will call at this time tomorrow. I am sorry to have troubled you, but I felt it was my duty to say what I have said. Others, to whom you are quite free to report this interview, will tell you that I usually mean what I say, and I was never more in earnest in my life. Good-morning, madam."

The colonel turned and left the room, Mrs. Holmes recognizing his departure by the slightest inclination of her dainty head.

For some time after her guest had left she sat in the same chair, her long-lashed eyes fastened on her interlocked fingers and a look of unusual seriousness on her face, which had aged perceptibly during the meeting.

Her vanity was hurt, for Colonel Ellis was the first man she had met in Honolulu who had not treated her

with smiling gallantry and induced her to believe that he was impressed by her. But she had to confess to herself that she respected him all the more for his strength and candor.

After fully half an hour, during which time the taciturn Clem popped in her head to look at her, Marguerite Holmes remained absorbed in contemplation. At length she stood up, removed her bonnet and wrap, then went to her own room, and, throwing herself face downward on the bed, sobbed as if her heart were breaking.

Did she lament the attack made on Captain Featherstone? Was her heart cut at the prospect of being forced to surrender her hold on the ardent and romantic Kohala? Was her conscience stirred to life by the memory of a life error? Did she fret over Colonel Ellis's discovery and the prospect of her own threatened ambitions; or did she, womanlike, give way to her tears as the only comforting outlet to her own consciousness of helplessness and weakness? To these inquiries we cannot make answer, but the details of these records may enable the reader to determine.

CHAPTER IX.

KOHALA'S JEALOUSY AROUSED.

AT the council called by Keona of Hawaii there was not a person present with a drop of white blood in his veins. At the feast all were natives. Such meetings were always held in secret, and guards were kept out

to prevent the approach of a white man or to give warning of the same.

Formerly Americans and Englishmen, with the brutal arrogance of race superiority, have tried to force their way into such native gatherings; but the fact that such intruders were always "found missing" soon afterward and were never seen or heard of again led to the belief that the natives, though ordinarily very amiable people, were ready to defend some of their rights with their lives, and that they were quite as ready, if the occasion warranted it, to take life, as in the days of Captain Cook. There were signs in the upper sky of coming day when Keona, preceded by four tall natives bearing paddles, walked down between Kohala and Leila to the shore. The young women preceded them, singing as if the night had brought no fatigue, and the men with the spears and shields brought up the rear.

As became his rank, the canoe of Keona was the largest. Into this the chief, his prospective son-in-law and his daughter got, and then a score of strong men pushed it out from the shell-strewn sand to the smooth expanse between the barrier reef and the shore.

As soon as the canoe was afloat the four rowers sprang from the water and took their seats, without causing a roll in the light, graceful craft.

Kohala had a misty memory of having seen such sights when a child, and particularly on the occasion of his former visit to the sacred cavern; but this did not impair the striking and picturesque novelty of his surroundings.

From his flower-covered seat beside Leila he looked about him and saw an army, or rather a flotilla, of canoes dashing from the shore, as if endowed with life,

and he beheld them forming with all the regularity of trained troops on parade.

From the center of the flotilla, after all were in readiness and the fires on shore extinguished, the shell bugle of the old priest, Helna, sounded the signal to advance. This was answered by a cheer from the men; then, to the singing of the women, the rise and fall and splash of the paddles kept perfect time, and, as if directed by one power, the canoes moved up the shore.

The morning and evening twilights are brief on the lines of and within the tropics; but in Hawaii the mountains, like Mauna Loa, towering above the white shore and emerald valleys for fourteen thousand feet, catch the light of the coming sun long before he is visible to the lower world; and so, like great reflectors, they diffuse the rays and fill their surroundings with such a lovely, poetic twilight as no other land in the world enjoys. Day does not seem to come with the sun, but rather to float down, cool, calm and refreshing, from the snowy heights of the inland peaks.

Kohala, to the fine imagination peculiar to his race, added the taste and culture of the world's best schools. He had the childlike freshness and capacity for enjoyment of the savage plus the culture that comes from an eager study of all that the foremost people have done in the world's advance.

He saw the opal light turning the mountains into great beacons and flooding the shore and sea. He saw the east glowing like an amethyst, then changing to translucent ruby. He saw the pink glow on the shore and the dark emerald of the stately palms gradually growing more distinct, as if they were marching out in stately ranks to meet the canoes. He saw the black water

changing to liquid malachite and the breakers on the barrier reef turning to banks of iridescent pearl.

The light grew more intense, and he saw the bright eyes and eager faces of his warlike followers, and he heard the singing of the maidens, as sweet and fresh as when their voices first thrilled him in the sacred cavern. The light grew brighter; the east was ablaze; the rim of the mighty sun rose over the sea and marked out a path that flashed, straight as an arrow and red as the fresh heart-blood, to the shore. And the red rays turned redder the stern brow of Keona; but they made more beautiful, because they revealed more distinctly, the face of Leila, who sat with bowed head by his side.

If ever a scene were calculated to absorb wholly a man's thought it was this one. But while nothing escaped the notice of the youth, in whose honor all this was being done, there was one thing needed to complete his happiness. If Marguerite Holmes were by his side to enjoy with him, then, indeed, would the cup of his rapture be full. But, whether down on the glowing, pulsating sea, or up on the calm, frozen heights of Mauna Loa, either would have been Eden with her by his side.

The sun was half an hour high when the canoe of the chief turned into a palm-bordered cove, the canoes of his immediate retainers following. Before the flotilla broke up the men rose in their canoes, raised their paddles like poised lances, and, taking the signal from the shell trumpets of the Kahinas, they sent up a cheer; then the singing women rose, and, throwing toward him the flowers that had adorned their shining black tresses, shouted: "Long live Kohala, our king! Long live Leila, his bride!"

Although a Hawaiian in every fiber of his being, Keona was far too great and shrewd a man to ignore the agencies whereby the white man gathered to himself wealth and power. He might be called well educated. He was a prosperous sugar planter, and he had pasture lands covered by vast herds up the mountain-sides.

His home, set amid groves of orange and lemon, and walled in by irregular ranks of cocoanut and date palm trees, was quite as grand in its way as the palace at Honolulu. His house was furnished after the American style, and an array of trained servants were ready to do his bidding; yet it was well known that, when he did not have white visitors, he dressed and ate as his ancestors had done before they knew that there was a white man in the world.

The canoes made a landing at a little pier near Keona's house; but, instead of leaving the shore, the men and women divided, one party going up the stream to a line of bathhouses, and within a few minutes all were enjoying a morning bath.

After the bath Keona escorted his guest to the house, where they found Leila and breakfast awaiting them. Kohala ate some fruit and then was escorted to a cool chamber. He lay down, and the scenes through which he had passed the night before and his last meeting with Marguerite Holmes chased each other in wild confusion through his brain, till he dropped off to sleep.

When he awoke it was high noon, and a native boy was beside the bed fanning him. In response to Kohala's question, the boy, after bowing, said, in the native tongue:

"It is the hour when the sun is the hottest and the shadows the shortest."

"And your master?"

"He has ridden into the hills to look after the herds."

"And your mistress, Leila?"

"Leila bade me say, when you awoke, that she awaits you with luncheon in the arbor that overlooks the sea," said the boy, with a graceful wave of the fan in the direction from which came the sound of the breakers on the barrier reef.

Kohala rose and dressed, in European attire, which he was very glad to resume; then, guided by the lad, he went down to the beautiful, blossom-covered arbor, where he found Leila, dressed in a loose, cool white wrapper and reading a book, just as he had seen American girls doing in the shaded grounds of the best summer villas at Newport.

With an ease and grace that he had never seen surpassed, Leila bade him good-morning, gave him her soft, shapely hand and asked him how he had rested.

She was a beautiful savage in her costume of the night before; now she was a well-bred lady, without any suggestion of ornament about her person, unless it might be the single crimson blossom at her throat.

As she moved about, the loose white robe, that in itself was far from graceful, served to bring out the beauty of her lithe form and the exquisite grace of her bearing.

He would, indeed, have been a poor physiognomist who could not have told from the girl's suppressed manner and the timid glances of the soft black eyes, as she arranged the luncheon and fixed seats for herself and Kohala, that she loved him with all the fire and force of her intense nature.

As Kohala watched her he had to confess to himself that she was far more beautiful than Marguerite Holmes, and also that she was quite the Englishwoman's peer in

grace and culture. He also realized that, for his own good and the good of Hawaii, it was his duty to marry this exquisite native girl. But love is as selfish as it is unreasoning.

After they had nibbled at the fruits and drank each a glass of iced orange sherbet, Kohala said :

"It seems as if all the peace of heaven were here. Leila, as the mistress of such a home, you should be very happy."

"No man or woman can be happy," replied Leila, with her eyes fixed on the limitless sea, "so long as the heart yearns for something it does not possess."

"Surely you are not in that state?" He regretted having said this the instant he had spoken.

Although cultured and refined, the chief's daughter had not been brought up to conceal her feelings. Up to the coming of Kohala from beyond the sea she had never had a wish ungratified.

Since her earliest memory she had been taught that she was the betrothed of the youth who was yet to be the king of Hawaii. She loved to think of him in solitude, and as she grew to womanhood and he sent her his pictures from the land of the white man she tried to give life to the shadow and to picture him all she found him when he came.

It was not with her a case of love at first sight; she had loved him through all the years of her reasoning life, loved him with increasing intensity as the years rolled on, and this love culminated in the most ardent passion when she met him after his return.

She had heard of his infatuation for Marguerite Holmes, and she had seen him lavishing on the little Englishwoman the attentions for which her own heart

hungered; and she tried to allay her jealousy and to soothe her anguish with the belief that he would change as soon as he was freed from the allurements and temptations of Honolulu, and, above all, from the influence of the Queen, whose purpose, with keen feminine perception, she saw.

Before replying to Kohala's question she looked at him for some seconds, until he began to feel uncomfortable under her gaze, then said:

"Yes. I am in that state. Kohala, can you remember when we were in the cavern before last night?"

"It is to me like a dream," he replied.

"But you know why you went there?"

"Yes; I was taken there by my father."

"As I was by mine. I was then but four years of age. You were four years older; still, from then till now in not one hour of my waking life have the obligations of that time been absent from my mind. While you were in foreign lands I was praying for your return and planning for the happier days of Hawaii that must surely come to our race when you were their ruler and I was your wife. Have you, too, thought of these things, Kohala?"

"I have," he replied, with averted face.

"And you have hoped for them?"

"The happiness of my race has been the one motive of my life. It is that that made me a student in the white man's schools and brought me back to my native land. But I have had no time to give to love, and I have come to think that, no matter what our parents may have done in the long ago, when we reached years of discretion we should be controlled by our own hearts."

"And that is what I believe, and that is what I feel.

Think you I could not have had lovers among the best of our own people and the richest of the whites?" she asked, as she sat more erect, and a strange, dangerous light came into her great black eyes.

"I am sure of it," replied Kohala, "for you are very beautiful—more beautiful than any white woman I have ever met, and wise as their wisest."

"But think you that I have?"

"No."

"And why have I not?"

"Because the best was not worthy of you," he said, evasively.

"No!" she responded, with startling emphasis. "It is because through all my life I have loved and waited for the coming of my king! You came, and I felt that the day that was to make me your queen was at hand. You came, but with you came a white woman, and they tell me that she, like a thief who cannot value what she has stolen, has robbed me of the heart of Kohala! Is this true?"

Kohala's cheeks had been olive, but now they turned red. In his confusion he rose to his feet and got so far in his denial as to say, "No!" when a step was heard on the shell walk near by, and the next instant Colonel Ellis stood at the entrance of the arbor.

The colonel was well known to Leila, and, after saluting the young people and telling them that he had just come from Honolulu, he took a letter from his breast-pocket and handed it to Kohala, saying:

"That is of great importance to you. Read it. Leila will pardon you."

The colonel sat down and began to fan himself with his straw hat, while Kohala stepped outside the arbor.

The young man tore off the envelope and was surprised to see that the writing was the colonel's. He read the following:

"DEAR KOHALA—You must return to Honolulu with me at once. What your friends have feared is true. The Englishwoman has deceived you. She has other lovers, and one of them she is going to marry as soon as her purpose with you is gained. This I am ready to prove to your entire satisfaction.

"Your friend, so long as you are the friend of Hawaii,
"NORMAN ELLIS."

As Kohala read he leaned against the arbor, and his lips drew back like a scabbard from his white teeth.

CHAPTER X.

BACK TO HONOLULU.

KOHALA, as if unwilling to credit the evidence of his sight, read over and over again the note Colonel Ellis had given him; then, satisfied that he had read it aright the first time, he crushed it in his right palm and stared down at the breakers on the reef without seeing them.

At length he became aware of the hum of voices in the arbor, and he came back to a comprehension of the situation.

He realized that it would not do to show Leila that he was awfully excited, lest he might be asked to explain the cause; so, with an effort of will, he brought his lips together and covered the daggerlike flash of his teeth. From his handsome face he succeeded in banishing the

fierce expression that had transformed him for the instant into an angered and unreasoning savage. But, determined though he was, and successful though he was in banishing from his eyes and mouth the signs of intense hate, he was powerless to still the wild leaping of his heart. He heard the colonel saying:

"Yes, Leila, it is all-important that Kohala should return with me at once to Honolulu. I shall leave a letter for your father explaining why I have not remained to see him."

"But if there is danger to Kohala in Honolulu," said Leila, "I shall go there with you."

"But there is not, I assure you. We have enlisted a regiment of men who are under the command of Colonel Loring—you know him; he is betrothed to my daughter Alice—and if any danger threatens Kohala he and his men are ready to avert it. The Queen is using her every effort to retain the throne; but it is rocking beneath her, and she must soon descend of her own volition or be hurled to the ground by the motion," said the colonel.

"And is there danger of war?" asked Leila.

"No, I hope not; yet we realize that the best way to avert it is to be prepared for it. But as for Kohala, fear not for him," said the colonel, with a little laugh that found no response in her heart. "I shall return him to you in safety."

The colonel went to the entrance of the arbor, and was about to call the youth for whom he had come when he came in himself.

"Well, Kohala, what think you of that note?" asked the colonel.

"I cannot believe it true," was the reply.

"Nor did I think you would. But your own eyes and ears will prove to you that it is every syllable true. Are you ready to leave for Hilo?"

"I am; but I must first see Keona and express to him my great gratitude for his kindness."

"I shall do that service for you," said Leila, "though my father wants no thanks for what is to him at once a duty and a pleasure. If our friend, Colonel Ellis, thinks your presence needed at once at Honolulu, go with him, for in times like these we cannot give thought to personal ease nor to ordinary courtesy, if they detain us."

"Spoken like the daughter of a chief!" cried the colonel, who had a great admiration for the beautiful girl and who was more than eager that his ward should regard her in the same light.

The colonel had come over from Hilo in a buggy drawn by a pair of his own team, and he was famed for having the fastest and best-bred horses in Hawaii.

Kohala's trunk was fastened to the shelf behind the buggy, and the horses were hitched and prancing with impatience to be off.

The young man gave Leila his hand, and he was about to raise hers gallantly to his lips when, to his surprise and confusion, she threw her graceful arms about his neck and kissed him again and again, saying, as she released him:

"My king! You are mine! You belong to Leila and Hawaii."

"Splendid girl, that Leila," said Colonel Ellis, as the horses dashed over the circular road along the coast to Hilo. "She is worth a million such creatures as that

little, thin adventuress you are breaking your heart over."

"She is all you say," replied Kohala, yet internally revolting against what the colonel had said.

The young man had heard before that Marguerite Holmes had deceived others and would deceive him, yet so long as he had not the direct evidence of this fact he was unwilling to believe that she was not all she claimed to be to him.

He honored and respected Colonel Ellis, who, since his childhood, had been to him as a father, and, while he believed him noble, he tried to comfort himself with the thought that he was not true to himself in his condemnation of Marguerite Holmes.

A few minutes of silence followed this, during which time the colonel, who was smoking a cigar, succeeded in getting the spirited team down to a settled pace, which it could keep up without harm as far as Hilo, fifteen miles away.

The woman he was flying to—not the beautiful girl he had left—filled and troubled the heart of the young man.

He reasoned that other women had been false; he had read and heard of such; but what lover ever thought it possible that the woman he loved could be placed in such a category? Certainly not the youth who was undergoing his first delightful but torturing experience of the tender passion.

Coughing, to steady his nerves rather than to clear his throat, Kohala, unable longer to keep back the anguish and curiosity that filled his heart, asked:

"How did you learn, colonel, that Mrs. Holmes was deceiving me?"

"Through the best of sources," said the colonel.

"But what are they?"

"My own ears."

"But you do not know her."

"But I do."

"I was not aware of that."

"Still it is true."

"Then you must have become acquainted with her since I left."

"That is true."

"How did you come to meet her?"

"Through Dr. Wallace."

"I do not know him."

"Well, I know him. He is a fine old fellow and a widower, and, I may add, he is one of this woman's dupes. He, too, is in love with her; and believes she will accept him at the right time; and I am inclined to think she will if she does not hook a man more to her liking before she leaves Honolulu. Why, the woman had hardly set eyes on me before she began to spread her net to entrap me. But I know the tricks of the class," and the colonel blew out a cloud of smoke and laughed till the horses threatened to run away.

Speaking very slowly and as if with an effort, Kohala asked:

"Is it because of her attempt to flirt with you that you judge her?"

"Indeed it is not," said the colonel.

"Did you speak of me?"

"Yes. I brought your name up."

"But why?"

"Because I want to save you."

"And you told her so?"

"I did."

"And that is all you know against her?"

"No, Kohala, for her own sake I wish it were."

"Do you object to telling me the reason for your suspicions?"

"In connection with that woman, I have no suspicions."

"What then?"

"Convictions!" exclaimed the colonel.

"And you have good reasons for them?"

"The best in the world."

"Then, for Heaven's sake tell me and ease my heart. I am sure you will say nothing you do not know to be true."

"Nothing that I do not know to be true. Since you left Honolulu I have, with my own eyes, seen your precious friend, Captain Featherstone, kissing the woman who is making a fool of you."

"I can't believe it!"

"Then you mean to say I am willfully lying?" said the colonel, with a ring of anger in his voice.

"No, no, colonel, not that; only that you are deceiving yourself," replied Kohala, in a voice trembling with excitement.

"Kohala, look at me and tell me how long you have known me."

Without looking, Kohala replied:

"As long as I can remember."

"Did you ever know me to tell a lie?"

"Never."

"Did you ever think my mind was not clear?"

"No."

"Do you think I can see you there by my side?"

"Surely."

"And you hear my voice?"

"I do."

"And I hear yours?"

"Yes."

"Well, just as clearly and distinctly I saw this man Featherstone kissing this adventuress, Mrs. Holmes, and I heard him telling her that as soon as his plans were perfected and you were declared king that they should leave Honolulu as man and wife."

"When was this?"

"The night before I left."

"And she seemed to consent?"

"Seemed to consent! When a woman offers no objection to such familiarity she consents," said the colonel, scornfully.

"Pardon me, my best of friends, if for the moment I should regard this as a horrible dream, said Kohala, with his hands pressed to his eyes as if to shut out the burning light. "It is all so unexpected that I cannot realize it. She told me that she loved me, and, loving her, I believed it. If, in truth, she has deceived me, then farewell to her and Hawaii."

"That is all nonsense, my son," said the colonel, with more kindness in his voice. "Every young man worth a snap has passed through the same experience. Some one has said, and I believe it, that the human heart is like a beef-steak—the more it is pounded the tenderer it gets. Of course, you feel mighty bad over this. I remember I did when, many years ago, I discovered that my best girl had betrayed me and run away with another man; but after a few weeks I got over it and was

as good as new—better, indeed, for I had all the benefit of the experience.”

“That may be,” said Kohala, quietly, “but you are not a Hawaiian.”

“Oh, nonsense! When it comes to love, human nature is the same all the world over.”

The colonel threw away the stump of the cigar he had been smoking and fixed his eyes on the road in front, far down which he could see the white steeples shooting up through the palms that embowered Hilo. Kohala wanted to dwell on this subject, but as he could get no comfort from the man who had given him all this agony he lapsed into silence.

There was much that he had not told his friend, much that must yet come to his knowledge; yet he dared not speak, for he felt that if the truth were known the blow, which he did not fear so far as it threatened himself, would fall on the woman he loved.

He had all faith in Colonel Ellis, and believed him incapable of deceit or falsehood. He realized, further, that his guardian must have some ground for his charge; but if an angel had appeared and told him at that moment that Marguerite Holmes was false to him he would have treated the message with scorn and incredulity.

Curiously enough, while his love for the Englishwoman was strengthened rather than abated, and he still believed her entirely true and the colonel entirely mistaken, he suddenly conceived the most violent dislike for Captain Featherstone.

He could well see how Featherstone and every other man could fall in love with Marguerite; but, loverlike,

it was entirely beyond his comprehension that she should love any man but himself.

At length the foaming horses were halted at the pier, where the colonel's steam-yacht was made fast.

Kohala's trunk was taken on board. Steam was up, and while a servant was walking the horses back to their stable the yacht was headed for the open sea.

As soon as the vessel was under way Kohala went to his stateroom and lay down. Some time afterward he was called to dinner, but he excused himself.

About ten o'clock that night a servant brought him in some tea and toast, but he could not eat it. Trouble is a great destroyer of appetite.

It was midnight before he dropped off to sleep. When he awoke the thumping of the engines had ceased, and, looking out through the port, he saw that the sun was well up and that the yacht was moored to her dock in the harbor of Honolulu.

CHAPTER XI.

PREPARING FOR THE STRUGGLE.

HONOLULU is never a bustling city, in the American sense. When the excitement caused by the Queen's purpose to force an unjust and illegal constitution on the people came to the knowledge of the citizens the city was in as great a state of uproar as Park Row, New York, on election night.

The natives, as if dreading an explosion, the reason for which but a few of them could understand, drew

off by themselves and discussed the situation in whispers from the standpoint of their fears, for, though they would stand up for the Queen against the encroachments of the white men, yet they did not like her.

Bolder but equally cautious, the white population gathered in groups on the streets and discussed the revolution which all felt to be inevitable.

The office of the American Minister was crowded with merchants, his own countrymen, and many French and Germans, all pondering over what was best to be done to insure protection to life and property in the event of an outbreak.

By this time each side had decided on the course to be pursued, and as a result, Honolulu was in a state of calm that all saw was far more ominous than the first noisy and excited outbreak.

It was well known to the citizens, well known to the police, and, of course well known to the vigilant adherents of the Queen, who had now made the palace their headquarters, that bands of white men went nightly down the road to the race-track, where they threw out guards to prevent intrusion, and where it was believed Colonel Arthur Loring was drilling them, though as yet neither side had attempted to raid the arsenal, which it was well known both sides were watching.

But the present calm was ominous. It was such as comes upon the Hawaiian Mountains with the black clouds that tell of an impending storm.

The white, uniformed guard before the palace and the dusky policeman, pacing before the Parliament House across the way, seemed both absorbed in other matters than their immediate duties.

Since the inevitable split between herself and a ma-

jority of the foreign residents began the Queen had been seen but little on the streets, and then she was closely veiled and in a covered carriage.

During the day there were but few people seen entering or leaving the palace, but at night this seeming neglect was made up for.

It was well known that the police were devoted to Her Majesty, and so they were shunned by her opponents, all of whom were prepared to resist an illegal arrest.

But there were events of too much importance to the Queen to be kept from her knowledge till night.

Colonel Ellis's yacht, with Kohala on board, had scarcely been made fast to her dock when a young native, a clerk at the Government House, started for the palace.

The Queen was closeted with her minister, Mr. Eli Porter, when the clerk rapped at the door and was told to enter, for, though the sovereigns of Hawaii have tried to imitate the formality and exclusiveness of European rulers, they have never had the means to support such state, nor is it at all certain that their native adherents, who still retain much of the old clan spirit, would submit to it.

"Hello, Lan!" called out Porter, when the young man stood bowing and panting before Her Majesty, "what is up now?"

"Colonel Ellis has returned," said the messenger.

"Well," snapped the Queen, "there is nothing startling in that. As there was no good ground for hoping that Colonel Ellis might be drowned, we, of course, expected him back."

"But, Your Majesty," continued the messenger, "Kohala has come, too!"

"Kohala here?" exclaimed the Queen.

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"And he returned with Colonel Ellis?"

"He did, Your Majesty."

"Well, what do you think of it, Mr. Porter?" asked the Queen, as she turned and looked at her minister.

"I am not at all surprised," said Mr. Porter. "Indeed, I may say that I am glad." Then, to the messenger: "That will do, Lan; you can leave."

As soon as the young man had gone out the Queen said, rather petulantly:

"Why are you glad that the pretender is here, Mr. Porter?"

"Because here we can watch him, and hold him. Once under the control of Keona and his daughter, he would be out of our reach. Why, I think it shows bad generalship to fetch him here."

"They did not fetch him," said the Queen, with a grim laugh.

"Who brought him, think you?"

"Marguerite Holmes."

"I think Your Majesty is right."

"I know I am."

"Good; then if Marguerite Holmes can control him—and I think there is but little doubt of her power—we must see to it that the lady does not escape our influence," said Porter, and he rose and backed two steps from the Queen's presence, as if about to depart, when she gave her royal permission.

"Do you know, Mr. Porter, that I have recently changed my mind about this woman?" said the Queen, with the subdued tone of one about to communicate a secret.

Mr. Porter took a step nearer, and asked:

"In what way, Your Majesty?"

"I think she is weak and cunning."

"Does Your Majesty call that a discovery?" asked Mr. Porter.

"Not at all. But I have come to believe that she loves Kohala better than she loves any other being in the world, and that is a discovery."

"Her capacity for love, I imagine, is rather varied," said Mr. Porter, with a sneer. "But why should we care who or what she is, so long as she answers our purpose? On the whole, however, I should be glad to know that what you say is true, for in that event we can the better use her for our own ends. Now, with Your Majesty's consent, I shall withdraw, for it is possible that the dreaded raid on the armory may be made to-night, and I must be ready with our friends to see that the arms do not fall into the hands of the rebels."

"And you will avoid bloodshed?" she asked.

"If it can be avoided, Your Majesty."

And Mr. Porter left the palace and went over to the Government House, where he had an office, but where for some weeks there had been but little public business transacted.

He found a dozen men, nearly all "full-bloods" or half-breeds, awaiting him, and all looking as if they feared something serious might immediately happen if any of them spoke above a whisper.

Lan, the young man who had brought the news of Kohala's arrival to the palace, was present, and he had evidently reported the same thing, for they were discussing the matter and speculating as to what it portended.

Speaking in their native tongue—a language which

Porter understood quite as well as he did English—a tall, powerfully built Hawaiian, who was employed in the Queen's gardens and whose breath told that he had acquired at least one of the white man's most destructive vices, said:

"Why bother about this youth, Kohala? Why fear him when six inches of steel in his heart will put him out of the way forever?" and the man, as if to show that the blade and the arm to drive it were ready, drew from his belt a long two-edged dagger.

Porter took the weapon, tried the edges against the ball of his thumb, as some men try a razor before shaving, then said:

"Yes, with that, Hoi, a brave man could do the work; but if he was discovered, I wouldn't care to insure his life, so long as there are Americans in Honolulu."

"The man brave enough to do the deed will be too cunning to be detected; yet there will be a great risk, and it should be paid for. What say you to that, Eli Porter?"

"I say you are right. But put the weapon away. This is not the time or place to talk."

The man whom Porter called "Hoi" was sheathing the dagger when Captain Featherstone came in, looking very much excited.

"Mr. Porter," he began, "I must see you alone and at once!"

Mr. Porter led the captain into his private office, closed the door and asked:

"Well, captain, what is the new danger?"

"You know that this man whom they call 'Colonel' Loring, though of late he was known as 'captain,' is a trained

soldier, a graduate of the great American military school at West Point?"

"I am aware of that," replied Porter, "but are you not also a trained soldier?"

"Yes; but my countrymen, the English, will not stand by me as the Americans do by Loring."

"The Americans are powerless, so long as they have no arms, and they cannot get arms while a hundred of the Queen's most stalwart adherents are secreted in the arsenal."

"Yet, Mr. Porter, they have arms!"

"You are sure?"

"I am certain."

"But, in the name of all that is reasonable, how could they get them in Honolulu without my knowledge? I have ordered all the stores that sell arms and ammunition to be closed."

"And they were closed, a fact that made it easier for the Americans to get all the pistols and ammunition they needed by the back doors. Then, men have been going on board the *Boston* in gangs of late, and it is believed they have brought away rifles under their long coats. Our Consul is certain that, at a signal to be given by the Americans on shore, the captain of the *Boston* will at once land his sailors and marines, seize the palace, supplant the Hawaiian flag with that of the States and depose Her Majesty by that act."

"And think you that the English captain and the English Consul will look idly on while that is being done?" asked Porter.

"They cannot help themselves. They dare not precipitate a war with the States."

"Then what would you advise?"

"That you precipitate the inevitable."

"In what way?"

"Show your hand and your force. There are five thousand men ready to oppose the Americans, and they will do it if Kohala can be induced to lead them—"

"Which would mean that within twenty-four hours Kohala would be proclaimed King of Hawaii."

"Better that than an American protectorate. You know better than I can tell you that the days of the Queen, as a ruler, are numbered. You and all her friends, even Her Majesty, will reap the advantage of the course I suggest," said Featherstone, with unusual energy of manner.

"Which is to resign in favor of Kohala?"

"Exactly."

"And so ignore the Princess Kaiulani, whom she has willed to be her successor?"

"As the will of the Queen is ignored by even her friends it is better that she should make a virtue of a necessity. The course I propose means success; any other course is ruin."

"But could we get Kohala to agree to this?" asked Porter, evidently impressed by the other's words and manner.

"I can promise that."

"But why are you so sure?"

"I know Mrs. Holmes; she is my friend—"

"Every man's friend," sneered Porter.

"No, sir!" said Featherstone, hotly. "She is a lady, and has no talent for deceit, any more than she has love for the Americans. To keep Hawaii from their grasp she is willing to use to the utmost the power she has over Kohala. Whatever she advises he will do."

"The more fool Kohala. But I must have time to think over what you have said. I can do nothing without the concurrence of the Queen."

"But time is flying. There is not a minute to be lost. To-night, if ever, the blow for ascendancy must be dealt!" said Featherstone, and he enforced his words with emphatic gestures.

"Good; then you bring me the assurance—and, mark you, there must be no doubt about it—that Kohala is ready to lead on our side if the Queen resigns in his favor, and then I will tell you our decision. At present we are beating the wind. Go to Mrs. Holmes at once and get her to secure Kohala's agreement in writing. That will settle matters," and Mr. Porter reopened the door leading into the general office.

Captain Featherstone replaced his hat and started out to where a closed carriage awaited him. He was evidently disappointed and angered at Porter's seeming indifference. He did not know that Porter clearly understood his purpose, and that he was quite as much opposed to the rule of the English as he was to that of the Americans.

"Where to, sir?" asked the driver.

"To Mrs. Holmes's," said Featherstone, as he sprang into the carriage and closed the door with an angry bang.

CHAPTER XII.

AN EXCITED MEETING.

It was the middle of the afternoon when Kohala and Colonel Ellis took dinner in the cabin. In his anxiety to see Marguerite Holmes he would have gone without his dinner; but he had sufficient self-control left, or, at least, so he imagined, to keep his feelings from his friend.

As if reading his thoughts, the colonel said, when they rose from the table:

"You must try to forget your own affairs for the present, and come with me to the Hawaiian Hotel. Our friends, many of whom have not met you, will be there, and let me say that your future success will depend on the impression you make, so try and banish this lady from your mind for the time being."

Kohala coughed and nodded to indicate that he fully understood what was expected of him and his own inability to realize it.

To "banish this lady from his mind for the time being!" Why, Colonel Ellis might as well have asked him to stop breathing for the time being, for the one would have been quite as possible as the other.

He had tried to banish her from his mind, but that very effort of will served but to make her the more fixed in all his thoughts.

His nature was romantic rather than heroic, intense rather than strong; yet its very weakness was due to the absorbing and engrossing fidelity with which he clung to the idol of his heart, believing that the wo-

man whom he could so love must in every way be worthy of his adoration.

But he could not have felt this love and been incapable of jealousy. He was quite prepared to believe in the treachery of Captain Featherstone; but it would have been like a knife in the heart even to suspect Marguerite Holmes of treason.

Had he been a white man he would have doubted, or at least have investigated on less evidence; but in matters where the emotions were concerned he reasoned from his hopes, and all the innate impulses of his barbaric descent asserted themselves.

Without attracting attention he and Colonel Ellis were driven to the Hawaiian Hotel, on the broad veranda of which they found a number of United States naval officers, in white undress uniforms. These gentlemen bowed to the colonel, but did not try to stop him, though it was evident from the whispering that followed his disappearance with Kohala that they fully understood the purport of his coming.

Strolling about the ample, palm-shaded grounds there were a number of English naval officers in citizen's dress, smoking and chatting as if they had no other purpose in mind than to while away the hot hours of a tropic afternoon.

The officers on the veranda and those under the trees were most courteous to each other when they met, and when they stopped to chat they discussed everything but that which was uppermost in their minds.

The most optimistic could not hide from himself the fact that, within the week, the guns of their respective ships might be blazing into each other in the harbor of Honolulu.

The Council of Public Safety was in session in the upper room before referred to, and it was guarded by armed men within and without.

Although well known to these guards, the rules of the Council were so strict that the colonel could not be admitted till he had given the pass-word and countersign and vouched for the loyalty of his companion.

There were fully thirty earnest white men present, and, at sight of the colonel and Kohala, they rose to their feet and applauded, to show their respect and delight.

Kohala was personally introduced to all the men present whom he did not already know, and then he was given a seat beside the colonel, who took the presiding chair.

Mr. George King, who had been acting as president during the colonel's absence, saluted, and said:

"Colonel Loring was about to give us a report of the situation from the standpoint of a soldier; if our president offers no objections to this, it might be well for him to go on, for it is evident to all of us that the crisis for which we have been preparing for weeks has at length come."

"Colonel Loring's report will be in order," said the president, and he stilled the hum of voices by rapping with his gavel on the long table about which they were gathered.

Colonel Loring was in citizen's dress, but a uniform was not necessary to make him look what he was, every inch the soldier.

Rising, and occasionally refreshing his memory by reference to a note-book which he held open, Colonel Loring said:

“Mr. President, and gentlemen of the Council of Public Safety, it is hardly necessary for me to assure you that, since you placed me in command of the Provisional troops of Hawaii, I have done everything in my power to perfect the organization and to make it efficient.”

He was interrupted here by applause, none the less hearty for its being suppressed.

“We have at present about five hundred men, fairly well armed and drilled, and twice that number who are ready to join us as soon as we need them. We need them now; but, without arms, they would be in the way and would only serve to add to our loss in the event of a conflict with the forces of the Queen.”

“Where is the arsenal?” asked an impulsive Frenchman.

“Still in the hands of the authorities, or, I should say, it is in the keeping of the creatures of the Queen,” replied Colonel Loring.

“Then why not take it into our keeping at once?”

This suggestion met with the same suppressed applause, and the men about the table nodded their approval.

“It is of that I would speak,” said Colonel Loring.

“Go on! Go on!” came from all parts of the room.

“Our enemies are watching us—”

“We know it!”

“And if we do not seize the arsenal this very night and so precipitate the conflict, then the other party will do it, and they will be in a position to defy us.”

“What force guards the arsenal?” asked Mr. King.

“It is supposed to be watched by some half-dozen soldiers; but, as a matter of fact, Minister Porter has been filling the place every night with a hundred or more

men. A hundred such men, if properly approached, can offer no very serious resistance; but if five thousand men are gathered there it will be very different. I have learned the signal which the enemy propose to give when they wish to assemble their forces."

"What is it?" asked a dozen men.

"A beacon fire is to be lit at midnight on the crest of the Punch Bowl. For the past week but few of the Queen's adherents who are able to bear arms have gone to bed before morning," said Colonel Loring, referring for confirmation to his note-book.

"Why can we not have a force at the Punch Bowl to prevent the beacon?" asked the president.

"I have taken care of that," replied Colonel Loring, quietly. "Every night, under a cool, brave officer, a band of our best men have been concealed on the crest of the Punch Bowl. If the fire were started it would be at once extinguished, and rockets would announce to us that fact and the opening of the contest."

"In such an event," said the president, "what means have you taken, here in the city, to announce to our friends that the struggle has begun?"

"We have men stationed in all the belfries of the churches and on all the towers of the engine-houses. As soon as the rockets are seen the bells will announce the fact to our friends and they will assemble at places decided on, and under leaders who have my instructions as to what is to be done. I have taken every precaution, and I think you can trust me," said Colonel Loring, with the modest confidence that is ever the characteristic of innate military ability.

With the calmness but rapidity of action that distinguishes veterans under fire the Council hurried

through a great deal of business, and at its conclusion every one present began to shout:

“Kohala! Kohala! Kohala!”

The young man had attended public meetings before, and so knew what was expected of him. In all that had been done and was being done by the men present he was in perfect sympathy; yet one may have a profound sympathy without being able, publicly, to give his reasons for the same.

Mastering his nervousness with an evident effort, Kohala rose to his feet, and, steadying himself by holding on to the chair on which he had been seated, he said, in the clear, melodious accents that were not his least charm:

“Gentlemen, I am a Hawaiian by birth and blood; but I trust that I am more than that, and that is, a man who is neither afraid nor ashamed to greet every other man, without regard to his race or nationality, as a brother.”

A cheer, that could not be restrained and that must have been heard in all parts of the hotel, greeted this fine sentiment.

“I have neither the experience nor the wisdom to address men so much older than myself,” he continued, “but I am not so dull as not to understand my country’s present unhappy situation. Thanks to Colonel Ellis, I have been opposed to hereditary monarchs ever since I began to reason. This I say, though well aware that my own prominence in this movement is entirely due to the fact that, in line of descent, I am the rightful heir to the throne of Hawaii.”

Again the applause broke out, and admiration glowed in the eyes of the men who heard the young orator. He went on:

"My rights to the throne I shall never press. I believe that all rulers should be elected, and Hawaii must be no exception. To achieve this end, command my fortune and my life; but, gentlemen, there is one thing you must not insist on."

"What is that?" asked a member.

"That I shall help you to establish here a free republic, and that I shall inaugurate that republic by marrying for reasons of State."

This produced some laughter and many questioning looks.

"An alliance between myself and the daughter of the chief of Hawaii might be good policy, as kings understand it. Mark you, the daughter of the chief is far too good for me; but you should not insist on treating me like the heir to a throne by selecting a wife for me, when you tell me I am to be a free citizen in a free land. My friends, that is all I have to say."

The applause broke out again when Kohala sat down, and, while it was evident that a majority of those present indorsed his views, it was equally evident that all were disappointed, for the allegiance of the chief Keona who was not a republican, was essential to the success of their plans.

Colonel Ellis admired the evidence of ability shown by Kohala, though disappointed, and comforted himself with the belief that the young man would change his mind as to the daughter of the chief when he learned for himself that the woman to whom he had given his heart was entirely unworthy.

By the time the Council had ended its session night had come to Honolulu.

Colonel Ellis told Kohala that they were both to re-

main at the Hawaiian Hotel, so as to be in a good position to receive reports and to direct affairs.

"I shall trust you to direct," said Kohala, with spirit; "that is the provence of mature men; but if there is to be action and danger I should blush for myself if I did not share it."

This was said in the presence of Colonel Loring, who, with Kohala and the colonel, was the only person present in the latter's room.

"Can you ride well?" asked Colonel Loring.

"I should; I began as a boy in the mountains of Hawaii, and I have never allowed my skill to lapse for want of use," replied Kohala.

"Then," said the colonel, "I shall feel glad and honored if you will serve on my staff to-night."

"But," joined in Colonel Ellis, "there may be danger."

"If there were no danger," said Kohala, proudly, "I should not care to serve."

"Spoken like a true soldier," said the gallant young leader of the Provisional army, as he shook Kohala's hand. "We can find plenty of men to sport uniforms and pose for the admiration of ladies when there is no danger; but the man who faces a danger for principle's sake—and the danger's sake—is a brother after my own heart."

"I shall not interfere with Kohala's purpose," said Colonel Ellis. "But you younger men must not forget that I, too, am a soldier, and so distinguish between duty and daring. The leader who unnecessarily exposes himself is not brave, but reckless. A general, unless the case be desperate and his example needed, should not lead a charge. The life of Kohala is of more importance to his country than that of a common soldier."

“Still the common soldier who risks his life for liberty is quite as noble a man as the general who commands him. For one night, at least, I shall be a common soldier, and subject to Colonel Loring’s command,” said Kohala, with an earnestness that had in it nothing of the braggart.

The three men had dinner together in Colonel Ellis’s private sitting-room; but not one of them seemed to enjoy the meal, so absorbed were they in the events which the night was to bring forth.

Colonel Loring had a horse provided for Kohala, and he saw that there were pistols in the holsters and a good supply of cartridges in the young man’s belt.

They bade good-by to Colonel Ellis, then rode down toward the race-track, picking up on the way other mounted men and many men on foot, all bound for the rendezvous where they had been assembling since the trouble began.

The stars were hidden by black clouds, as if the elements were in sympathy with the work to be done in Honolulu that night.

There were but few lights visible in private houses there were but few people on the streets, and a gloom that could be felt hung over “the Queen City of the Pacific.”

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FIRST BLOW IS STRUCK.

THERE were guards all along the road to the race-track; but vigilant though these men were, they could not prevent the silent, swarming spies of the Queen from watching and reporting on their movements.

To-night there was less secrecy than heretofore. Both sides felt that the time for action had come, and that the next twenty-four hours would settle whether Hawaii was to be free or to remain under the arbitrary dominion of a monarch who, of her own volition, or through the ill-advised influence of some of her ministers, had chosen to ignore the rights of her foreign-born subjects and to trample under foot the accepted constitution of all her people.

To Kohala, who kept by Colonel Loring's side, it seemed as if the young leader had entirely changed his character since they rode into the darkness from the Hawaiian Hotel.

Ordinarily, Colonel Loring was the embodiment of courtesy; indeed, he was distinguished for his easy, graceful manners and the entire calm and self-possession of his bearing; but while the latter had not left him, he was now quick and peremptory in his manner. His voice had in it a ring that insured obedience, and his every act told of a brain-directed energy that stirred his men and filled them with confidence; for soldiers, in or on the eve of action, ever admire a commander who can command.

Kohala expected that the colonel would form his men

into companies and march them directly down on the arsenal and storm it, if it were not at once surrendered; but in this he was disappointed.

Through a swarm of orderlies who stood ready to do his bidding the colonel assembled all his subordinate officers, and, as in the darkness he called each man by name, he gave him his special orders and saw before he retired that he understood them without fear of mistake.

As each subordinate was given instructions and told where he must assemble his men in the city, and what he was to do when the bells pealed forth their signal, he started off promptly to enforce the command.

In less than half an hour after their reaching the rendezvous, so perfect had been all the preliminaries, the organized troops, in small bodies and by different routes, were marching into the city.

"Now we are ready," said the colonel to Kohala, "let us ride back."

"But there are only a few men with us," said Kohala, as he looked about at the half-dozen silent, mounted men who remained behind.

"We have all we need now," said the colonel, calmly; "when we need more, depend on it they will be forthcoming."

They turned back to the city, the glow of whose lamps looked blood-red on the lowering clouds.

The other horsemen fell in behind, but not a word was spoken. The time for talk was past, and the hour for action had come.

The horsemen halted in a churchyard back of the palace and not a pistol-shot from the Hawaiian Hotel.

Here all dismounted, and they found men awaiting to hold their horses.

"Keep by my side, Kohala," said Colonel Loring, as a man came up with a dark-lantern and asked:

"Are you ready to go up, sir?"

"I am," said the colonel; "lead the way, Phipps."

The man with the lantern unlocked the church door, and, when the colonel, Kohala and the two men who were to act as a signal corps had entered, the door was closed again and the slide of the lantern thrown back, so as to show the winding stairs leading up to the steeple and belfry.

The steeple ended in a tower in which hung a bell, and as soon as the party reached the little platform at the end of the last stairs the light was hidden again.

Kohala looked over the rail, and the gas lamps and electric lights revealed the city at his feet. By the glare of the lamps before the Parliament House he could see the heroic gold and bronze statue of his famed ancestor, King Kamehameha, and his heart was stirred to emulation of that great chieftain's deeds.

The palace seemed to be wrapped in darkness; even the two lamps at the great entrance gate burned with a duller glow than usual.

The Hawaiian Hotel was, in contrast with its stygian surroundings, fairly ablaze with light, and Kohala could see the silhouetted figures of men moving swiftly across the illuminated spaces.

Down by the piers and out in the harbor he saw the colored lights that marked the port and starboard sides of warships and merchant ships at anchor; and far out beyond all these he saw the phosphorescent glow of the breakers on the barrier reef and he heard the incessant

and rhythmic booming that followed their recession and advance.

After this survey he faced to the north. In that direction lay the Punch Bowl, from which the expected signal was to come, and in which direction every face was turned.

But absorbing though the situation was, Kohala could not remain indifferent, even under such circumstances, to the one object that he could not banish from his mind. Soldiers on the battlefield, with the thunder of guns and the crimson carnage of death about them, have been carried in imagination back to the days of their boyhood, when they gathered wild flowers in the woods or followed the droning wild bee to her hive; but there was nothing so startlingly psychological in the thoughts of Kohala.

"If it were day," so he reasoned, "I could see the cottage where she lives." She was to him so bright, so self-luminous, that he felt pained to think that she must be in darkness, for he could not see the glimmer of a light in or about the place where she lived.

From his reverie—and in love reveries time flies fast and unnoticed—he was roused by the low hum of the voices about him, and he heard Colonel Loring saying to the man with the dark-lantern:

"Phipps, have you a watch?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"Step down where the light cannot be seen and let me know what time it is."

Phipps descended the steps some distance, a flash of light came up and vanished, then he reappeared and said:

"It is just half-past eleven, sir."

"Another long half-hour to wait," said a man beside the colonel.

"Have patience," was the young soldier's laughing response. "You may have more to do than you can well attend to before the night is over."

"Ay, faith," said Phipps, who spoke with the accent of an Irishman, "and it may be that the man who'll live to see daylight may find himself dead."

Another man was about to speak, but checked himself, for suddenly a light flashed out from the dome of the palace and it lit up the standard of Hawaii.

This was unusual, for it had been the custom to lower the flag with the sunset gun, and Colonel Loring was more than ever confident that the Queen's adherents were on the alert, and that the hour for action had come.

Following the appearance of the flag above the palace a cheer, or, rather, a shrill yell, came up from the streets, and the pounding of galloping hoofs could be heard.

At this juncture a man, who had made his way up the dark stairs, found Colonel Loring and said:

"I am ordered to report, sir, that there is a great crowd of natives gathering about the palace."

"We must expect that. How about the arsenal?" asked the colonel.

"There is no change there, sir."

"Very well. Report to our friends to stand ready for the signal. They will hear it and see it within ten minutes."

The man crept down again, and the quick fall of his feet was still echoing in the steeple when an exclamation burst from the men whose faces had been peering

northward for what seemed to them an interminable time.

"They've lit the beacon!" cried one.

From the head of the Punch Bowl a fountain of flame leaped into the sky, transforming the picturesque hill into a volcano, as it had been of old.

"Make ready the rockets, Phipps," said the colonel, his voice as calm as if there were no crisis at hand.

"All ready, sir," was the response.

Higher and higher rose the flames from the crest of the Punch Bowl, and again the shrill cheer came up from the direction of the palace.

"It's gone again!" cried a number of men, unable to suppress their excitement, for the fountain of flame died out as suddenly as it had appeared.

"Have the matches ready, Phipps."

"Ready they are, sir."

A few seconds of intense darkness over the Punch Bowl, then, like a pencil of light drawn swiftly against the black background of the night, a rocket rose up toward the lowering clouds, curved gracefully downward, then exploded, and was followed by a shower of globes, red, white and blue.

Two more rockets followed in quick succession. Then Phipps, under the colonel's orders, struck a match, and three rockets, with scarcely an interval of time between their appearance, shot up from the belfry and exploded directly over the palace.

"The bell, Phipps!"

The bell began to clang at once. A deep, hoarse cheer rang up from the streets. From tower and steeple other bells clanged out the alarm, and down by the shore there

was seen a flash, followed by the ominous booming of a gun.

"Now for the arsenal! Keep close beside me, Kohala!" said the colonel, as, with lantern held high above his head, for there was no longer need for disguise, he led the way to the ground, while the bell kept up its clanging as if it had gone mad or was being rung by a madman.

"Keep the horses here; we shall not need them at present," said the colonel, to the men waiting below.

There was no excitement in his voice and no sign of nervousness in his manner, yet Kohala, who kept close to his side as he ran for the arsenal, could see by the light of the lamps past which they dashed that there was an awful, an unconquerable earnestness in the young soldier's face.

There was not a policeman to be seen. At the sight of the rockets from the steeple and the first clanging of the bells the bravest of them had vanished.

Bugle calls and hoarse commands down the side streets where the volunteers had been impatiently waiting, the quick tramp, as of trained soldiers, the galloping of orderlies and the frightened cries of women and children in the houses, told that the revolution, so long dreaded by the people of Honolulu, had come.

Colonel Loring took a position near the arsenal, but Kohala noticed that, since leaving the steeple, he had not issued an order, nor was there any occasion for his doing so. His orders were given in advance, and so perfect were all the details that his subordinates promptly marched their men to the places that had been assigned them, and there halted till they should hear the bugles sound for the assault on the arsenal.

Although the Queen's adherents had long been expecting this very thing it came upon them with all the force of a surprise, for their work was checked in its very inception by Colonel Loring's signal corps.

Had the beacon been permitted to burn on the hill for twenty minutes, as its designers intended, the native force and the foreigners who took the side of the Queen would have rallied at the palace and marched at once on the arsenal. But the extinguishing of the light and the red glare of the rockets, with the answering rockets from the steeple, and the clanging of the bells, with the sudden movement of large bodies of armed men along the streets, had a most demoralizing effect on the men who, but one short hour before, were so confident of success that they expected to see every objectionable American on the warship *Boston* the following morning.

With his drawn sword grasped firmly in his right hand Colonel Loring, now reasonably well assured that he was master of the situation, advanced to the main door of the arsenal and knocked for admission.

After waiting long enough for a response without receiving any, he rapped again, saying, at the same time:

"Open at once, or I shall break in the door."

"Who is there?" asked a man in the voice of a native.

"I!" was the response.

"Who are you?"

"Colonel Arthur Loring, of the Provisional Army."

"I know no such man nor no such army."

"Then you had better make our acquaintance. Come, my man, I am in no mood for parleying."

"But I was placed here with my men to protect the Queen's property," said the man.

"There is no longer a Queen in Honolulu," answered the colonel.

"Where is Her Majesty?"

"There is no such person as Her Majesty. Will you open?" and the colonel beat on the door with the hilt of his sword, while a dozen brawny men appeared with a beam which they proposed to use as a battering ram.

"Hold up! we surrender!" cried the man from within.

Following this, lights were seen inside the building, the massive door was opened and the native soldiers and a number of natives with a few white men, all armed, came out, one at a time, and by the light of the improvised torches of Loring's men they laid down their weapons and were placed under guard.

Again a bugle sounded, and the company that had been detailed to take charge of the arsenal after its surrender marched in while the others fell into line like veterans, and, with the colonel at their head, advanced quickly toward the palace, not many hundred yards away.

There was no longer a guard before the entrance. The lights were extinguished in the great hall, and a timid Chinese gardener met the colonel at the steps and said:

"The Queen, she not here."

"Where is she?" asked the colonel.

"She go way."

"Where to?"

"Me not know," whined the man.

"Go up," said the colonel, to one of his men, "and take down the flag of Hawaii."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE QUEEN STILL DEFIANT.

ONE thing that has favored the continuance of hereditary rulers is the fact that they have been credited with qualities which they ought to have had, but which they rarely, if ever, possessed.

Queen Liliuokalani might have urged her sex as a reason to account for her want of physical courage were it not that in times of great danger, and even in the face of death, women who were not queens have shown a nerve and undaunted front such as the bravest man could scarcely hope to emulate.

The Queen of Hawaii committed the fatal blunder of underestimating the force and resolution of her opponents, and of overestimating the strength and fidelity of her adherents.

It has been said that any man will make a good soldier if well trained and properly led; but, with the exception of the handful of palace guards, whose occupation hitherto had been entirely ornamental, the Queen's followers were untrained, and, still worse, she had little politicians for leaders instead of resolute soldiers when the revolution came which she had herself invoked.

It was the belief of Her Majesty and her friends that there would be fighting at the arsenal and in and about the palace; so, as a matter of prudence, she went in disguise to the house of a friend a short distance away, and there confidently awaited the outcome of the struggle.

It had always been the custom, as with more powerful monarchs, to keep the royal standard floating over

the palace in the daytime when the Queen was present. It was, no doubt, to create the impression of her presence after she had fled that some of her foolish friends raised the flag at midnight and illuminated it with lanterns for the delusion of the people—but it failed of its purpose, if such was the intent.

From first to last it was never the purpose of the Council of Public Safety to injure the person of the Queen, nor, indeed, to shed a drop of blood unless its army was assailed and forcedly resisted in the performance of duties demanded by the crisis.

In addition to the gallant Colonel Loring's personal feelings in the matter the Council had commanded him to protect, at every hazard, the person of the Queen; so that she might have remained in the palace with perfect safety to herself and her household servants.

The Queen was anxiously awaiting the lighting of the beacon fire on the Punch Bowl when Lan, the young man who had brought her the news of Kohala's arrival with Colonel Ellis, came into the darkened sitting-room in the house to which she had fled and said:

"Your Majesty, it is as we have feared, Kohala is with the insurgents to-night."

"How know you this?" she demanded, in an angry voice.

"I saw him myself riding out with the man they call Colonel Loring to the rendezvous at the race-track."

The Queen rose, and raising her arms tragically, she cried out:

"Kohala is rushing to his own ruin fast enough; but if I had true friends about me he would not be permitted to torment me in this way."

She waved her hand toward the door, and Lan vanished.

At the same time that she left the palace for this house the Queen sent for Marguerite Holmes, the messenger having orders to fetch the lady back with him.

Lan had just taken his departure when another tap was heard at the door, and Mrs. Holmes, very ashy and with a pained, anxious look in her eyes, yet entirely self-possessed in her manner, came in.

Hitherto the Queen had been effusive in her demonstrations on meeting the little Englishwoman; but now the savage, usually dormant in her passionate nature, asserted itself.

As if talking to a servant with whom she had good cause to be angered, the Queen said:

"I sent for you this afternoon; why did you not come to me?"

"I was absent at the time," said Mrs. Holmes, demurely.

"But you found my note awaiting you?"

The Queen plumped into the chair from which she had risen; but, although etiquette required that her visitor could not imitate the royal conduct without the royal command, Mrs. Holmes sat quietly down and said, with well-bred calmness:

"I was not at all well when I got home, and so I lay down."

"But you first read my note?" said the Queen, hotly.

"Your Majesty, I did not read your note."

"Pray why not?"

"Because it was not handed me till I got up."

"But you have a servant?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"And she knew the note was from me?"

"Only that it was from the palace."

"But that should mean me! You never had a friend at the palace but myself, and now you haven't one in it or out of it," said the Queen, hot with anger.

"I am sorry if I have angered Your Majesty," said Marguerite Holmes, rising with quiet dignity and adding: "You see I have obeyed your second request. Is it to pour your wrath upon me when others have excited it that you have sent for me?"

"No, it is not."

"May I ask the wishes of Your Majesty?" said the little woman, choking down a sob, "for I am still far from strong."

"Sit down!"

The Queen waved her hand to the chair from which Marguerite had risen. She sat down, interlocked her thin fingers, as was her habit when perplexed, and waited.

"Do you know," said the Queen, in a lower if not a milder tone, "that Kohala is now in Honolulu?"

"I learned it not an hour ago," replied Marguerite.

"From himself?"

"No, Your Majesty; from Captain Featherstone."

"Captain Featherstone?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"And you permit him to visit you still?"

"I cannot help it, Your Majesty."

"Why not?"

"Because he does not know my secret."

"Then he treats you as a lover?"

"As a friend."

"Friend!" sneered the Queen. "I am not a fool! I

have never liked your friend, for I know him to be what many people say you are."

"May I ask Your Majesty what that is?"

"An adventurer!" hissed the Queen.

Marguerite made an effort as if to rise. At the sound of the word "adventurer" she started like a spirited horse at the touch of the unaccustomed spur; but she restrained herself, though she could not trust herself to speak.

The Queen half closed her eyes, till they looked like two dark luminous slits, and the heavy lips were compressed, as if she were making an effort to control herself. At length she asked:

"Do you not think it strange that Kohala should come to Honolulu without at once calling on you?"

"In these troublesome times, Your Majesty, I do not know what to think," was the response, and Marguerite Holmes pressed her hands to her eyes and hastily withdrew them.

"Do you still believe he loves you?"

"I can see no reason for his changing," said Marguerite, the trembling hands again pressed to her eyes.

"Young men often have strange fancies, which they imagine to be love."

"So I have heard, Your Majesty."

"Mrs. Holmes?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"You must find Kohala at once and fetch him to me."

"But if I cannot do so?"

"Cannot! You must, or—"

The Queen hesitated, and the slits grew narrower and the compression of the lips gave her a fierce expression.

"Or what, Your Majesty?"

“Or I shall give your secret to the world. Now, find him and fetch him.”

The Queen stood up, and Marguerite Holmes rose with an effort and tottered from the room.

As if her departure were the signal, rockets went whizzing into the air as soon as she had gained the street and all the church bells and fire bells began to clang.

Marguerite let fall her veil, while all about her she could hear the thunder of flying hoofs and the tramping of men. Shrill yells in the distance and hoarse cheers near by indicated to her the whereabouts of the rival factions.

Running rather than walking, and avoiding the illuminated places, Marguerite Holmes succeeded in reaching her cottage.

She found Clem awaiting her, and looking, as she always did, as stolid and sleepless as a sphynx.

“Get me a little wine, Clem!” gasped Marguerite, as she dropped into a chair and let her arms fall helplessly by her side.

Without any expression of sympathy in voice, face or manner Clem brought her mistress a glass of sherry, waited till she had sipped it down, then took the glass, and, turning it round between her thumb and finger, said, in her low, mechanical voice:

“He’s been here to see you, mem.”

“Whom do you mean, Clem?” and Marguerite looked up with more interest.

“The young, dark-complexioned prince.”

“Kohala?”

“Yes, mem, and he was rare disappointed not to find you.”

"Which way did he go?"

In her anxiety Marguerite rose to her feet and began putting on the gloves she had taken off.

"You told me not to say where you'd gone, mem, so, when he asked, I said I didn't know."

"What else did he say?"

"He asked if Captain Featherstone was in the habit of coming here very often."

"And what did you reply?"

"I said not too often to wear out his welcome, for he was a great friend and a countryman of yours."

"You should not have told him anything about it," said Marguerite, a faint flush coming to her cheeks.

"But it was the truth, and I could not help it. Oh, he's a rare fine gentleman, he is, even if his skin is dark, for he slipped a bit of American goold into my hand."

"And that was all he said?"

"Every word, mem."

"And he didn't say when he'd return?"

"No."

"Nor where he was to be found?"

"Not a word of anything like that, mem, I assure you," said Clem, as she backed to the door.

As Marguerite made no effort to detain her Clem kept up her backing till she had passed the door and closed it behind her.

She went to the little dining-room, but before setting down the glass in which she had brought the sherry, she helped herself to two glasses, draining each at a gulp, and muttering to herself as she did so: "Ah, me! this is a sad, sad, wicked world, and every one in it seems to be workin' for himself and nòt thinkin' of nò one else."

The person overhearing this might be led [to believe that Clem was herself a praiseworthy exception to the selfishness peculiar to all the rest of humanity; but, as will be shown, she was not beyond temptation, particularly when it came in the form of gold, for which she had the universal human fondness.

Waiting in the dark, for she had extinguished the light in her own room, till assured that her mistress was in bed, if not asleep, Clem crept softly out through the window that opened on the piazza, then, with a cloak about her gaunt form and a man's hat pulled down over her eyes so that her sex was disguised in the indistinct light, she made her way to the rear of the Hawaiian Hotel.

On nearing the place she slackened her pace and moved with more caution. At length a dark figure rose up before her, but, instead of being startled, she asked, without a tremor in the wooden voice:

"Is that you, Mr. Phipps?"

"Faith, me darlint," was the laughing response of the man who had guided Colonel Loring into the steeple, "it's mesel' and no one else. And it's tired enough I am waitin' here for you."

Phipps gave her his arm, led her into the hotel by the back way, and so conducted her to the chamber where the Council was in session.

CHAPTER XV.

WHERE IS KOHALA?

COLONEL ELLIS, with a half-dozen friends, was in the room in which the Council held its meetings, awaiting the outcome of the night's work, of which, judging by the confident expression on the faces of all the men present, no one seemed to entertain any doubt.

Every few minutes a messenger came in to report the progress of the men under Colonel Loring, and each of these confirmed the hope that the revolution would be as bloodless as it was wide-reaching in its effects.

Escorting Clem, Phipps, who had been elected a messenger of the Council, gave the pass-word at the guarded door, vouched for the fidelity of the strangely attired woman and entered.

As soon as the door was closed behind her Clem removed her hat from her stringy-looking head, threw her cloak over her arm, man-fashion, and bowed on rather stiff hinges to the gentleman at the head of the table.

The colonel had evidently met this strange woman before, for he nodded to her, just as if she were a man with whom he was forced to have unpleasant dealings, and, pointing to a chair at his left hand, said:

"Glad to see you are still alive, Mrs. Clem. Sit down, and tell me if this uproar has excited your nerves."

"I ain't got no narves," she said, grimly, whereat the men about the table laughed.

"That is the one thing"—the colonel was going to add, "and the only thing," but he did not—"that gives you an enviable pre-eminence over all your sex with whom

I have the honor to be acquainted. Nerve, Mrs. Clem, is an excellent thing in man or woman; but Heaven preserve me from people with nerves. Now, I suppose that little splinter of a woman, Mrs. Holmes, is just one bundle of parchment-covered nerves."

"It isn't that, sir; it's want of strength," said Clem. "But as to gettin' upset when there's trouble on I will say that she's just about as cool a hand as I ever met up with."

"Yes, Mrs. Clem, she is no doubt a very remarkable woman; but where is she now?" asked Colonel Ellis.

"At home and in bed, though I can't think she's so downright cool and calm as to sleep such a night as this," said Clem.

"And she called on the Queen to-night?"

"She did, sir."

"How did she seem when she came back?"

"She was right up and down rattled, and no mistake, sir."

"Did she have any callers during her absence?"

"Only one, sir."

"Who was he?"

"The handsome young dark gent."

"What! Kohala?"

"Yes, sir, that's his name, though I never can recall it when it's wanted."

"When was he there?" asked the colonel, his face growing very serious.

"Just 'bout half an hour after the bells began to ring."

"How long did he stay?"

"Only while I was tellin' him that Mrs. Holmes had gone out."

"Did you tell him where she had gone?"

"No, sir."

"But, of course, you knew?"

"I did, sir."

"And Mrs. Holmes seemed very much disappointed when she got back and learned that the young man had been there?"

"Yes, sir, she was that bad cut up that I had to fetch her some wine to keep her from swoonin' right off," said Clem.

Colonel Ellis stroked his forehead like a man much perplexed, then he called to Phipps:

"Find Colonel Loring at once, and ask him if he has seen Kohala within the last hour or if he knows where he is."

Phipps saluted and hurried out, and the colonel, after a further talk with Clem, gave her some money and dismissed her.

Within ten minutes Phipps, who had met Colonel Loring on his way to the hotel, returned with that gentleman.

"Why," said Colonel Loring, when he heard that Kohala had so recently called on Mrs. Holmes, "when we reached the palace I gave him a message for you. He must have passed Mrs. Holmes on the way thither and stopped in, for I recall that as I passed the cottage a short time before there were lights burning within."

"Well, he did not report to me," said the colonel, "and, knowing him as I do, I am sure that he would have done so if something serious had not befallen him."

"He was armed and knew how to care for himself," Colonel Loring ventured to say, though he clearly saw that this supposition did not eliminate the element of danger from the question.

"If a man were as strong as a giant and armed to the teeth," said Colonel Ellis, as if thinking aloud, "he might still be as a child before the dagger of an assassin."

"I think there is no need to be alarmed; still, if you say so, I shall have a search instituted at once," said Colonel Loring.

"I certainly do say so." Then, rising to his feet, Colonel Ellis added: "If any harm has befallen Kohala I shall demand an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, if I have to shed royal blood in retaliation!"

Colonel Loring saluted, and went out, followed by Phipps.

The young soldier was not at all to blame for the absence of Kohala. It was to give him something to do as a member of his staff that he sent him with a message to the chief of the Council; and if Kohala stopped on the way, as he certainly seemed to have done, the act was in direct violation of his duty as a volunteer soldier, and such he certainly was for the time being.

As they hurried to the arsenal, about which most of the soldiers were now encamped, Phipps proved to be the most dismal kind of a Job's comforter.

"Do you know, colonel," he said, "what I've just been thinkin'?"

"What?" snapped the colonel, who was too busy with his own thoughts to care for those of any one else.

"That some of these Yalla Kanakas is mighty treacherous."

"So are some white men."

"Thru for you, colonel; but most white min would give a fellow-mortal a chance to defend himsel'. Be-

gorra, I never did have no use for thim that has dark skins."

As the colonel's only comment was a disapproving grunt Phipps lapsed into silence.

The colonel found the men in camp about the armory in high spirits. He had issued an order against drinking, but the unexpected success of their venture had intoxicated the men like wine, and so they laughed and cheered and sang, and when the colonel came within the light of the campfires they cheered him to the echo. for, like a true soldier, he was very popular with his followers.

At sight of his face the uproar was stilled, for the men were quick to see that something unusual had happened.

Calling the officers into the building and excluding all others, the colonel told them that Kohala was missing and asked their advice in making a search.

One man said:

"Perhaps he has a sweetheart."

Another suggested:

"It may be that the young man got scared."

But the general opinion was that Kohala had either been assassinated or captured and held for a reward.

"If it's for a reward," said one of the officers, "we shall hear from his captors in the morning; but if he's done for, why, it's my private opinion that we've seen the last of him."

This view of the case, though warranted by the circumstances, was far from comforting to Colonel Loring.

"You, gentlemen," he said to the officers about him, "have men in your commands who are entirely familiar with every nook and corner of the city. Call these men

apart and tell them in secret what I want—that is, to find Kohala, dead or alive, and if dead, to secure those who were the cause. Mark you, there is not a moment to spare.”

The officers went out, and, within five minutes, returned to the building, each with from three to five men of his particular command.

Speaking in low, earnest tones, the colonel told the volunteers his reason for sending for them, and added:

“To the man who brings Kohala back, or reliable news of his whereabouts, I shall give from my own pocket a reward of one thousand dollars.”

Although this was not an overpowering inducement to any of them, all of whom were eager to assist their young commander, it can be said that the tendency of the reward was not to weaken their efforts or to dampen their ardor in the search. The men selected for this delicate undertaking were all Americans, and so accustomed to orderly methods of procedure.

One of their number, who at one time had been chief of police, and who was known as a detective of unusual shrewdness and one of the coolest and bravest men in the city, was elected to lead this extemporized organization for search.

This man's name was Blake, and he was slender and smooth-faced, slightly bald, and with a mouth that looked to be lipless.

Blake not only knew the city, but he knew all the shady characters in it. He had rare powers as a linguist, being able to understand the Hawaiians and to make himself understood in their tongue. He had the same facility with Portuguese, Chinese and Japanese,

these nationalities being among those most prominently represented in the population of Honolulu.

In addition to these qualifications Blake was a man of energy, and he had a fine talent for organization.

He knew the worth of every man who had been detailed for the search, and knew just where to place him to the best advantage.

Within a half-hour of Colonel Loring's return with Phipps to the arsenal Blake had mapped out his plans and dispatched the men to the different districts assigned them, telling them before they left to report to him from time to time at the Hawaiian Hotel.

"I thought," said Colonel Loring to Blake, when all the men had vanished, "that you would have gone out yourself."

"N—no," said Blake, shaking his head, "the time has not come for that yet, and I hope it may not come. I must get in the reports before I can act. It is as necessary to know what to avoid under these circumstances as it is to know what to look for. I shall sift all the reports, and if the young man is not found, then I shall put in my fine work. But let us get back to the hotel."

"You go to Colonel Ellis and tell him what I have done and what you are doing. I shall remain back till daylight, when I will detail guards to protect all the Government property in the city," said Colonel Loring.

Blake saluted, and hurried back, with Phipps, to the hotel.

The latter was stronger than ever of the opinion that Kohala had been done to death by "a knife in the hand of Yalla Kanaka."

Blake made no comment on this, but he had scarcely given his report to Colonel Ellis before an incident

transpired that tended to give strength to the theory of Phipps.

The outer guard sent in word that a native, who was known to be in the employ of Colonel Ellis, wanted to see him.

"Admit him at once," said the colonel.

A young Hawaiian, dressed in a straw hat and the loose blouse and wide cotton trousers of a field-hand, came bashfully into the room, removed his hat and saluted his master.

"Well, Tom, what is it?" asked the colonel.

Speaking in fairly good English, Tom said:

"I heard, sir, that Kohala was missing."

"Where did you hear it?"

"From two white men who passed me on the street not ten minutes ago, and who seemed to be sent out to search," said Tom.

"And you came to tell me this?"

"No, sir; to tell you what I know about Kohala."

"Go on! go on!" said the colonel, now sitting bolt upright and looking at the native as if trying to anticipate his story.

Looking into his straw hat, as if he saw there the source of his information and inspiration, Tom said:

"I know Hoi. Hoi is a Hawaiian and a bad, drunken man. It was this noon, and he was down by the water, sharpening his dagger, as if it was a razor. And I said: 'Hoi, why you do that?' and he say, 'to kill a man.'"

"Did he tell you whom he was going to kill?" asked the colonel.

"Oh, yes; for he think I am his great friend. He say: 'Tom, I get much money if to-night I kill a man. That man is young Kohala. Kohala, he troubles our Queen.'"

"And what did you do then?" asked the colonel.

"I do nothing; but I think Hoi, he's a great fool, and he is drunk. Then I think no more of what he say till I listen and hear the two white men telling, that Kohala he could not be found. So, my master, I come to tell you."

CHAPTER XVI.

MARGUERITE HOLMES LEARNS THE NEWS.

FOR its size, there is not in the world a more entirely cosmopolitan city than Honolulu.

Here, the Chinese, Japanese and Portuguese outnumber the natives and greatly exceed them in industry and prosperity. Here, also, are Africans and representatives of all the islands of the Pacific, from New Zealand to Formosa. Every European nation is represented, and, while in the main the whites are the best and the controlling element, yet among that class is to be found the most vicious and desperate criminals.

Although she had "left the palace" for what she called "prudential reasons," the Queen, with more spirit than wisdom, persisted in regarding herself as the ruler of Hawaii; and she gave her orders, and persisted in giving them, till at length she realized that they were not carried out, and then into her by no means lucid mind the truth flashed that the Provisional Government, set up in defiance of her claims, was the sole authority to be obeyed in Honolulu.

The morning following the revolution the American Minister, in order to secure protection to the property of

his own countrymen, called on Captain Wiltz, of the United States cruiser *Boston*, for assistance, and that gallant sailor responded by sending on shore a company of blue-jackets, armed with rifles, and under the command of prudent officers.

The sun was not an hour high before the flag of the Union was floating from the turret of the palace, for, by the act of the Minister, the Hawaiian Government was, for the time being, under the protection of the United States.

The Queen heard of this; indeed, she saw the flag as it went up, yet she comforted herself with the belief that the offense would not be permitted after her claims were made known to the American people.

"I shall again be recognized as the Queen of Hawaii." This is what she said to the many people who came to condole with her or to gratify their curiosity by seeing what a deposed Queen looked like.

Early the next morning she heard that a search was being made for Kohala, but she manifested no curiosity as to the reason of his absence, though it may be that she had this in mind when she dispatched a messenger for Mrs. Holmes.

Marguerite Holmes, though having much vital force and the resisting power that so often accompanies a high nervous organization, was far from being robust. Whatever extra effort she made was a draft on her resources, which, as is ever the case, had to be paid back to that inexorable banker, Nature, with compound interest.

It was near daylight when she dropped off into a troubled sleep, which might be described as unconsciousness rather than rest, for, as she rolled and tossed, she could still hear the whizzing of the rockets, the cheering

of the troops and the still more alarming clanging of the bells.

When she woke it was near noon, and Clem was standing by the bedside with a cup of tea in her hand, the providing of which was the first service she rendered her mistress every morning.

Marguerite Holmes stroked her head and looked about her in that dazed, half-awake way of people who have not had enough nor the proper kind of sleep.

"What time is it, Clem?" she asked, when the fog had cleared from her still troubled brain.

"It'll be near noon, mem, I'm thinkin'," said Clem, "and I'd a-brought in the tea before, but I saw you were sleepin', and looked tired. I've got your bath ready, mem, and I'm shore you'll look as fresh as a pink after you're dressed."

This was a very long speech for Clem, who appeared to be in excellent spirits. Her mistress nodded, to indicate that her presence was not necessary, and then got up and made her toilet, taking little sips of tea in the pauses which her physical exhaustion made necessary.

Marguerite Holmes went through the motions of eating breakfast. Rather a lonely meal it was, but the woman, who was the soul of every gathering in which she found herself, led rather a solitary life, and loneliness is never so oppressive as at meal-times.

She had just finished, and her eyes began to grow a little brighter, when Clem, who had come in to take away the things, said:

"They had great carryin's on last night, mem."

"Was there bloodshed?" asked Marguerite, with a shudder.

"No, mem; that is, there was no right up-and-down

regular shootin' and stabbin', like I've heerd about in battles, where hundreds and thousands of men is killed; still they think there's been some one hurt."

"What do you mean?" and Mrs. Holmes pushed the ripples of bronze hair back from her broad, low forehead and looked more than ever like a girl in her teens.

"Of course, mem, you ain't heard that the Yankee sojers has took the town and put their flag up over the palace?" said Clem, purposely avoiding a direct answer, for she had something of the dramatic instinct in her mental make-up and wanted to work her information up to a fitting climax.

"I expected as much," said Marguerite, quietly. "But what about the bloodshed; who has been hurt?"

"They don't just know, mem, whether he has been hurt or not as yet, for they haven't been able to find him, with all their sarchin'."

"To find whom, Clem?" asked Marguerite, with increasing interest.

"The young gent."

"What young gent?" In her anxiety she fell into Clem's vernacular.

"The dark young prince—I can never recall his name—that is so fond of you, mem," and Clem smacked her thin lips as if the words had an unusually pleasant taste.

"Kohala!" exclaimed Marguerite, and the natural pallor gave place to an ashy hue, and the long-lashed gray eyes took on an expression of indescribable agony.

"Yes, mem, that's the one I mean."

"But what of him?" and Marguerite rose from her chair and looked into the stony eyes and stolid face of her attendant.

"The last thing that's been heard of him, mem, dead

or alive, was when he called on you last night and you was out."

"Who told you this?"

"Oh, mem, detectives and others has been here, but I told 'em you was sick. And they thought, fust off, that you'd run away with him, till I let one man named Blake look in the bedroom door and see for himself that you was present and sleepin' like a little angel. But, for all that, I'm shore there's detectives a-watchin' of the house; but what they're doin' of it for is more than I can make out," and Clem actually smiled, something that seemed to transform her into another but an equally repulsive person.

Marguerite Holmes stood stroking her forehead like one in a dream; all the light had gone out of her eyes and her thin lips trembled and were bloodless.

Clem was beginning to feel alarmed at this awful silence, and was about to propose that she run across the street and call in Dr. Wallace when the bell rang violently. She answered it, and came back to say:

"It's the same young man, mem, that's been here before from the Queen."

"Admit him," said Marguerite, hoarsely.

"Her Majesty desires me to say," said Lan, who, though of graceful person, was anything but a courtier in his manner, "that she'd like to see Mrs. Holmes just as soon as she can come to her."

"Please say that I shall come at once," said Marguerite.

Lan vanished, and Mrs. Holmes went to her room and put on the becoming little violet bonnet and a black lace shawl—these things with no thought of effect, but because they were the first that came to hand.

"When will you be back, mem?" asked Clem, as her mistress stood at the door, in a weak, hesitating way.

"I do not know."

"But the captain, mem, he was here this mornin' and told me not to wake you, but I know he wants to see you very much. What'll I say to him, mem, if he calls, as he'll be most shore to do, for he seems to be very much troubled?"

"Say to him, also, that you do not know when I shall return."

"And must I say that you told me so?"

"You can, if you see fit."

"He may not like it, mem."

"Do as you are told, Clem; you are just a little bolder than I care to see you."

Into the sweet, troubled face there came for an instant a mingled expression of dignity and indignation that told more than volumes that the little woman had not forgotten in her anguish the lines that separated her from her servant.

Clem said: "Beg parding, mem," and stepped back, to choke her laughter with her apron when her mistress was gone.

Marguerite Holmes always wore a veil on the streets—one of those dark, spider-web things that neither conceals the face nor seriously interferes with the vision of the wearer.

Without seeming to do so, as soon as she entered the street from the garden surrounding the cottage she took a quick glance up and down. There were many men in sight, some of them detectives, no doubt, and she felt that they were watching her and discussing her; but

she walked on seemingly indifferent to everything but her own torturing thoughts.

So far as it was known to her most intimate acquaintances in Honolulu there was nothing in this woman that indicated depth of feeling or seriousness of character. Indeed, if her best friend, Dr. Wallace, were questioned about it he would have been forced to confess, as a truthful man, that Mrs. Holmes gave those with whom she came in contact the impression of being light-hearted to the limit of frivolity, if not of flippancy; yet, with all this, there was a certain indescribable dignity about her in her lightest moods and most trivial times that indicated something better under the surface than appeared upon it.

Had Dr. Wallace seen her now, as she hurried toward the house where the dethroned Queen was stopping, he would hardly have recognized the pallid, drawn and pain-lined face for that of the smiling, sweet-voiced little woman who had thrown the net of her fascinations about him and about others, as more beautiful and more intellectual women could not have done.

Marguerite Holmes was more or less of a mystery to every one who knew her, but to not one of them was she so much of a mystery as she was to herself.

As drowning men are said, in the few seconds preceding unconsciousness, to see before their mental vision—like a landscape lit up by the lightning's flash on a starless, stormy night—the whole panorama of their lives, so she, as she hurried on, heart-tortured and seemingly with no destination in view, saw her own past, with its gloom and sunlight, its errors and its good alike, the results of unreasoning impulse.

Orphaned while yet a child; educated on the remnant

of a fortune left by a spendthrift father: married by stealth, and while yet a schoolgirl, to an Oxford student unable to pay his debts, much less able to support her, the sore trials of life came to her at a time when more fortunate girls retain still a fondness for their dolls.

All this she saw, as she had often seen it when she debated with herself the question of continuing the struggle. She saw her husband, whose education at the great English school had unfitted him for, rather than equipping him for, the battle of life, growing weaker and weaker through the excesses of his student life, which he had not the physique to stand nor the means to continue. After vainly trying to live as a coach for backward students, he was given a small annuity by a rich uncle and sent out to California to grow better, or to die; to the uncle, no doubt, the latter would have been preferred.

And so she saw herself a widow, with the small allowance continued. Her constitution, never strong, was shattered, and nothing was left but the indescribable charm that might have made her the ornament of a happy home and the wife of a worthy man.

All this Marguerite Holmes had kept to herself, for she had the secretiveness that is born of pride, and would have assumed an air of opulence amid penury and given the impression that she had been to a banquet when she was pinched with hunger.

Curiously enough this strange woman did not realize her one great weakness, and that was her desire to be admired, to make an impression on men, not so much for the sake of provoking love as to excite admiration, not so much to bring men under her influence as to feel that she need only be alone so long as she desired.

As a widow, she was enjoying the attentions which the insane folly of her early marriage had deprived her of as a girl.

She had never imagined what the love of a strong, ardent man could be till she met Kohala on the steamer that took her to Honolulu. His intellect and the grace and beauty of his person attracted her, for, though by no means well-educated herself, she had an intense admiration for men of culture and force; and in the contemplation of this superb young Hawaiian, with his manliness, his ardor and his frankness, she forgot all about the difference in race, as did all who came into contact with him.

Realizing her own dependence on the annuity that barely enabled her to live, and which would have been inadequate if she had not been so skillful with her needle as to obviate the necessity for a seamstress, it was prudent if not natural for her to treat the advances of Captain Featherstone with consideration, though, from first to last, she never regarded him with the feeling which she wanted to give to the man who took her first husband's place.

Kohala, from the beginning, she considered entirely out of her reach, and if she schemed to aid Featherstone it was with no intent to win at the expense of the young Hawaiian. All this ran through her mind, till she found herself rapping at the door of the house in which the Queen had found refuge.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONTINUING THE SEARCH.

COLONEL ELLIS, in his anxiety for Kohala, forgot, for the time, the revolution which he and his associates had

set in motion, a revolution which was destined to make an important, if not the most important, epoch in Hawaiian history

He had no sleep; but his was not an exceptional case, for there were very few, but drunken men and children, who went to bed in Honolulu that night.

Soon after daylight his daughter Alice, who, it will be remembered, was betrothed to Colonel Loring, and who acted as one of the Queen's maids of honor on the occasion of the last ball given at the palace, came to see him, with her mother.

Alice Ellis was an exceedingly pretty and attractive girl, with the self-confidence and entire lack of self-consciousness that are the distinguishing traits in the character of the typical American girl. Ever since her earliest childhood Alice had known Kohala. He had been her playmate, and, with a childlike indifference to race, she grew to regard him as a brother then, and the years had strengthened rather than weakened this delightful sisterly affection.

Anxiety for the safety of her father and her lover, of which Colonel Loring, with great thoughtfulness, kept her apprised from time to time, kept her and her mother awake all night; for, though by no means timid women, they could not remain indifferent to the danger when the coolest and wisest men in the city feared that their purpose could hardly be achieved without bloodshed.

The delight of Alice Ellis and her mother at hearing of the great success of the revolution was quickly changed to pale-faced grief when the colonel explained his own haggard looks by telling them of the inexplicable absence of Kohala.

Mrs. Ellis was "certain that that designing woman,"

meaning Mrs. Holmes, "was at the bottom of it." But her husband, who had been of the same opinion, told her that Mrs. Holmes, evidently a sick woman, was at that very moment asleep, or at least in bed, in her own room, and that her cottage was being watched by the detectives.

Alice Ellis was nothing if not just. She had had her own doubts as to Mrs. Holmes, but she was too noble-minded to breathe these doubts to another, and too generous to restrain an innate impulse to defend those whoaped the evil-minded by baseless denunciation.

"I have not seen a great deal of Mrs. Holmes," she said, "but what I have seen I have liked. Poor little thing! she may possibly be what we very good and proper people call imprudent, but she is all alone, with a thousand to criticise and slander and not one, that I know of, to whisper to her a friendly word of caution. I have noticed, and it has pained me to see it, that women who pose as models of all the proprieties watch the little widow, not that they may discover what is good in her, but that they may find something to distort into a scandal."

"I am glad she has one champion in Honolulu," said the colonel, not at all displeased at the position his daughter had taken.

"I quite agree with Alice," said Mrs. Ellis, who, at heart, was one of the best of women; "but she must confess that Mrs. Holmes has been, to put it mildly, most imprudent in her flirtations with poor Kohala, who, in matters of the heart is as innocent as a child."

"My precious dearest!" said Alice, and she threw her right arm about her mother's neck and kissed her, "in matters of the heart, as you call love, we need no long

experience. Isn't Cupid pictured as a blind boy? He would be a disgusting little cad if he went about with his eyes open and wearing a dress suit. But pray, if Mrs. Holmes loves Kohala and Kohala loves her—as he certainly does—I can't for the life of me see what moral code either or both of them is violating in that. Love is natural, and must be expressed. As to this baby-betrothing of Leila and Kohala, it is something peculiar to Congo savages and European princes, and I am astonished that my good, kind, noble, darlingest papa should lend himself to the perpetuation of such a disagreeable Kanaka custom. I wonder how he would like it if some one had come along about the time he was getting up courage to propose to you, mamma, and told him that he mustn't do anything so wicked, for he was betrothed to another girl while he was yet in short skirts?"

"But Leila loves him," broke in Mrs. Ellis.

"Well, that shows more taste than spirit in Leila. Why—and I say this knowing that she is a fine girl of whom I am very fond—ever since Kohala has come back she has figuratively and literally thrown herself at his head. That's enough to frighten off any man, and much more one who is inclined to lean the other way. She should have concealed her love till she was sure of him—"

"As you did with Arthur Loring?" said the colonel.

"Exactly: that is an excellent illustration. Why, I kept that man on thorns for three months, and all the time I loved him quite as warmly and sincerely as Leila of Hawaii can ever love Kohala. If this is to be a free country let people marry for love and not for reasons of State, say I."

"And so say we all of us," said Colonel Loring, who

had come into the room unnoticed while Alice was giving such free and eloquent expression to her views on matrimony.

Colonel Loring, in response to a torrent of inquiries said that he had learned nothing more about Kohala. Blake was now out, and the town was being thoroughly searched, and all the roads leading from it were guarded.

He advised Colonel Ellis to go home to breakfast with his wife and daughter, saying that he would remain back at headquarters to attend to anything that might turn up.

This suggestion was acted upon at once, and, weary in body and tortured in mind, Colonel Loring threw himself on a sofa. Though his reason told him he was in no way to blame, he still felt, as Kohala had been in his charge, that he was responsible for his safety.

"I think, colonel, that if you could manage to swallow a glass of good whisky that it'd aize yer mind and give you an appetite for the breakfast," said Phipps, the glitter in his eyes and a certain hesitancy in his speech telling that he had himself been testing the merits of his own prescription that morning.

"No, Phipps, I want no whisky to provoke my appetite, nor do you, either. And, let me say, my good fellow, that the first man I find under the influence of liquor in my command I'll make an example of."

"And, sure, it's dead right ye'll be, colonel. I am an owld sojer mesel', and jooty's jooty, and I'd be for hangin' the man that got drunk in the face of the inimy; but in a time of pace, such as the prisint seems to be, it's a intirely different thing." And Phipps saluted in good military fashion and went down to order the colonel's breakfast.

Colonel Loring had just about concluded the morning meal when Blake, looking as fresh as if he had not been up and at work all night, came in.

"Well, Blake, what news?" asked the colonel.

"We've found Hoi," replied Blake.

"For Heaven's sake, Blake, go right on and tell me all about it. I am too nervous to ask questions," and the colonel handed Blake a cigar, lit one himself, and again stretched out, full-length, on the sofa.

"I know Hoi," said Blake, as he bit off the end of his cigar and struck a match. "He's a lazy, drunken loafer, without the courage of a mouse or the conscience of a hog. We found him drunk down in the Chinese Quarter, as I expected, and he had his famous dagger still in his belt. It is as bright as it was the day he bought it. Of course, he might have done work with it and cleaned it after; but I am sure he wasn't sober enough last night to do that, or anything else."

"What did you do with the fellow?"

"Sent him to the lockup to get sober, which won't be till this afternoon, and then I'll frighten him out of the little wits he has left; but, as I said before, I am sure he's not in this job," said Blake, and he struck another match and pulled till the cigar was smoking to his satisfaction; then he changed his position and his manner, and asked:

"Colonel, what do you know about the man who calls himself 'Captain Featherstone, late of the English Army'?"

"Only that he became acquainted with Kohala in Europe some time ago, and since then, it seems, he has stuck as close to him as if he were his shadow."

"Was he in Kohala's employ, think you?"

"No, Blake, I am very sure he was not. I think, however, from the fact that he hangs round the English Consulate a great deal, that it is possible he is in some way in the employ of that Government."

"Yes, I have thought as much myself," said Blake.

"But why do you ask about Featherstone—surely you do not associate him in your mind with the abduction of Kohala, if, indeed, he has been abducted?" and the colonel sat up and flipped the ashes from his cigar.

"Colonel Loring," said Blake, speaking very slowly and with his face turned to the ceiling, the better to blow out smoke-rings, "I don't know much about diplomacy, I'll confess; but, like all men, I have my own opinions, even about things that are a bit hazy in my mind. But you are a graduate of West Point and know everything—"

"You are far off there, Blake; but go on," said the colonel.

"Now, don't you think if the English Government had the slightest ghost of an excuse for seizing on to these here islands that they'd do it at once and take the consequences?"

"Yes, Blake, that has been England's habit, and as a consequence she has gathered to herself more real estate than is profitable or that she can well take care of," said the colonel.

"Yes; but she ain't got anything finer than these islands, for God's sun in the twenty-four hours don't shine on a fairer or a richer land than this, except it might be on the green hills way down in the heart of Kentucky, where, to my mind, the Garden of Eden was originally built, or if it wasn't, it must have been an oversight. Now, if England wanted to get these islands in what

might look like a fair deal how do you think she'd go to work about it?"

"Upon my word, Blake, I can't imagine, unless she seized them by force, and that would mean a row with Uncle Sam."

"No, she doesn't want a row; but how would this work: Kohala, he's the rightful heir to the throne—that we all know—but he doesn't want it; if he did, nine-tenths of the natives would side with him. But suppose he was made a prisoner like, and he was told: 'You must declare yourself King of Hawaii at once, or die,' the chances are he'd proclaim himself—I know I would. Well, the natives stand by him and England shouting 'Fair play, and give the boy a chance!' comes to his help. Why, then the game would be in England's hands, and the King would soon find himself a puppet."

"That's a bold theory, Blake, and it shows you are more of a diplomat than I am," said the colonel.

"There may be nothing in all this, mark you; but I've made up my mind to watch Featherstone. He's playing for big stakes, but I am satisfied that he has a job contract and is not regularly employed by the English Government. They couldn't afford to do that, but there is nothing to prevent their handsomely rewarding the man who turns over to them the King and Kingdom of Hawaii. That's what I've been ciphering out. That's why I think Featherstone has been sticking to Kohala closer than a brother. And that's why I'm willing to bet, even, that when we come to make the last analysis of the situation—as the assayers have it—we'll find that this Featherstone is responsible for the absence of our friend," and Blake lit his cigar again, while the colonel surveyed him with undisguised admiration.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A STORMY SCENE.

CAPTAIN FEATHERSTONE was quite as unpopular among the men of Honolulu as Marguerite Holmes was with the women. To be sure, he had been invited to dinner on board one of the English ships, and he had his mail addressed to the care of the English Consul, things that gave him a shadowy social standing, as did the fact that he and Kohala were, seemingly, intimate friends. Yet there was something about Featherstone that provoked dislike and distrust, though his bitterest hater, if called on for a reason for his dislike, could have been forced to confess that he had no tangible reason, and he might quote the old rhyme:

“ I do not like you, Doctor Fell,
But why it is I cannot tell;
Yet there is this I know full well—
I do not like you, Doctor Fell.”

Captain Featherstone's attentions to the little widow did not escape the alert vigilance of the gossips of Honolulu—gossips who are the curse of every isolated community between the Poles and the Equator. Some actually believed that the two were actually married, and that the fact was kept from the public the better to enable them to carry out their schemes for despoiling it.

Featherstone, while defying the purpose of the Americans to force the Queen from the throne, was far too shrewd to openly take sides with Her Majesty or personally to oppose the forces organized by Colonel Loring.

Marguerite Holmes was not a strong woman nor even a self-reliant one; had she been either, she would never

have permitted herself to be brought so entirely under the influence of a man whom, at heart, she thoroughly disliked, and, as a consequence, dreaded.

The fact that she was a stranger in a strange land and that Featherstone was her countryman—and in a strange land a countryman seems like a kinsman—might be urged as an excuse for her treatment of this man. She was far too intelligent not to see through his purpose, and far too cunning to lend herself entirely to his schemes, though she had the tact to keep these thoughts to herself.

Marguerite Holmes did not know anything about the fate of Kohala, and this added to her torture; but from the instant of the first information she had, without Blake's shrewd method of reasoning, reached exactly the same conclusion.

She called upon the Queen, and found Her Deposed Majesty even more defiant and arbitrary than had been her habit.

Without any salutation, and scarcely deigning to look at her little visitor, the Queen ordered the others present to leave the room, and the door had hardly closed behind them when she asked, with maddening rudeness:

"Woman! what have you done with this man?"

"Pardon me, but I fail to understand Your Majesty," said Marguerite, and she looked down on the Queen, who remained seated, with a look of undisguised contempt in the long-lashed eyes.

"Where is Kohala?" demanded the Queen.

"I do not know," said Marguerite, with forced calmness.

"You don't?"

"I do not."

"And you wish me to believe that?"

"I wish Your Majesty to believe nothing. You have seen fit to speak to me in an insulting way and I choose to answer as becomes a lady."

"You grow defiant because you think I am no longer the Queen of Hawaii: is that it?"

"That is not it. Your being a Queen did not elevate your character, nor can the loss of your throne degrade it. I speak to you now as woman to woman, and I repeat that I do not know what has become of this man."

"And yet the last time he was seen was when he called at your cottage."

"So I have been told."

"And you did not see him?"

"I did not."

"May I ask why?"

"Because at the very time he called I, though it was not an hour for an unprotected woman to be on the streets, yielding to the urgent summons of Your Majesty, came here," said Marguerite, with a dignity that was in striking contrast with the Queen's brusqueness.

"I suppose I must believe you," snapped the Queen.

"Your belief in this and in all other matters is one of the prerogatives of which the revolution has not deprived Your Majesty. I should prefer that you believed the truth, for your own sake, rather than the error for my own."

"Mrs. Holmes," said the Queen, with a calmer manner, that rather intensified the tigerish gleam in her half-closed eyes, "you no doubt imagine that the ceremony performed at the palace on the eve of Kohala's departure for Hawaii was a sham?"

"Your Majesty led me to infer that it was a sham, and

that my concurrence was necessary as a matter of diplomacy; but I do not think I was deceived, and, let me add, I am responsible for my own part in that transaction and am quite ready to face the consequences. And now, if Your Majesty has no further degradation to offer me, I shall ask permission to retire," and, before the Queen, who was choking with anger, could make a reply, Marguerite Holmes was at the other side of the door and out of the house.

The little woman withdrew from this strange interview feeling that she had not had the worst of it; and, although she had been inclined to side with the Queen's party, her heart now throbbed with genuine satisfaction as, on the way back, she saw the United States flag floating from the roof of the palace.

On reaching home she went at once to her own room, and was in the act of exchanging her street dress for the warm-colored wrapper that so well became her slender figure when Clem rapped at the door, and, with a forced little cough, such as she always prefaced an announcement with, she said:

"Please, mem, the captain is here."

"Captain Featherstone?" Marguerite mentioned the name, although there was no other captain among her acquaintances in Honolulu. "Show him into the sitting-room, Clem, and say that I shall join him presently."

"The sitting-room, mem?" said Clem, in surprise, for heretofore the captain had been received in the little gem of a boudoir, which Marguerite had daintily decorated with her own hands, and where she sewed and entertained her few lady callers.

"I said the sitting-room," repeated Marguerite, with

an emphasis that surprised Clem, who had come to believe that her mistress was as wanting in force as a child, and for which reason she held her in contempt, for the woman was of that servile class that impose on weakness and cringe before strength.

Captain Featherstone had been up all night, and he looked as if he had not been in bed for a week.

He was pacing the floor and stroking his mustache in a nervous way when Marguerite entered. His back was toward her when he heard her light steps, and, turning with extended arms, as if he were going to kiss her, he said :

"Flossy, I am glad to have found you in at last."

She drew back from his advance, motioned him to a chair, and, taking one herself, said :

"I have been here continuously, except when obeying the commands of Her Majesty to call on her, which I have done for the last time."

Featherstone, with an expression half angry and the other half perplexed, eyed the little woman over, and then asked :

"What is up with you?"

"Everything," she replied.

"What do you mean, Flossy? Surely you are not provoked at me?" he said, with forced calmness and something of the old gallantry in his voice and expression.

"No," she replied, "I am provoked at myself."

"But what for?"

"For being a fool and a tool, when all my instincts plead that I should do right and be true to myself. But the mischief is done; the milk is spilled, and crying will not restore it."

"Oh, come, come, you are nervous, and no wonder

after the excitement of last night. The Yankees have started a blaze that won't go down if they want it to. They imagine that they have everything their own way, but they will see they are counting without their host."

Featherstone waited, and Marguerite, seeing that some comment was expected, said:

"I do not understand it; I might if I were a man."

"But you fully understood the plans, as I laid them down to you from time to time. I am quite sure of that, and let me say my plans have not changed," said Featherstone, confidently.

"Not changed!" she echoed.

"Not in the slightest."

"Then the revolution, as they call it, has not effected them?"

"On the contrary, it has helped me."

"You surprise me."

"Yet it is true; and now all I want is that you shall give me your influence for a few days and we shall have everything just as we want it."

"I may be stupid, but I must confess I do not understand."

"Then I shall make myself clearer."

"If you can."

"You remember our plan—"

"Your plan, captain," she interrupted.

"Well, my plan, if you will have it so, to get Kohala to have himself proclaimed king, which he can be made to do only through the unbounded influence you have over him. The time for this has come, and nine-tenths of the natives and a majority of the whites are ready to sustain him, if he says the word. And now—"

"And now," interrupted Marguerite again, grief and

indignation mingling and glowing in her eyes, "there is one thing—and that the most essential—wanting to perfect your plans."

"What is that?" he coughed.

"Kohala!"

"Kohala?"

"Yes."

"I will not pretend to say that I do not know the young man is missing; but if I wanted to find him—and I shall want to find him if you are still ready to co-operate with me—I do not think there will be much trouble in doing so."

"Then Kohala is living!" she cried, and she clasped her hands and half raised them, as in the act of prayer.

"I feel very certain that he is; sure of it, indeed."

"And he is remaining away of his own volition?"

"Well, hardly that. His friends—and, mark you, I am telling you this in the strictest confidence—are keeping him away from the Americans, and will continue to keep him till he is ready to act; and he will be ready to act as soon as you tell him what to do."

Marguerite Holmes interlocked her fingers while Featherstone was speaking, and the little mouth worked as if in effort to keep back the words that demanded utterance. At length, unable longer to control herself, she sprang to her feet and cried out:

"Take me—take me to Kohala at once!"

"Why, you are surprisingly eager," said Featherstone, and the veins along his thick neck began to swell. "What is the reason for this unusual interest in the young man?"

"It is the best reason for interest that any woman can have," she said, and, with a glow of pride on her face, she looked straight into his blood-shot eyes.

"May I ask what that reason is?"

"You may."

"Then I do ask it."

"The reason is that I love him as I never loved man before! Love him as a woman should love the man to whom she is lawfully wed!"

CHAPTER XIX.

A VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION.

THE simile, "like lightning out of a cloudless sky," is trite but very effective, considering its basis in fact; but that and all other stock illustrations intended to picture intense surprise and indignant amazement would be entirely ineffectual to give an idea of Featherstone's astonishment when Marguerite Holmes, looking straight into his eyes, told him that she loved Kohala, and that she was his wife.

Captain Featherstone was the embodiment of selfishness. It is doubtful if he ever performed a generous act from a noble motive. He would have been as ready, for a price, to sell his country as he was to aid her; and he would have promised marriage to the most wrinkled and toothless hag in Hawaii if, by so doing, he could further his own debased ends.

For two years he had been a follower, a hanger-on of Kohala, his purpose being to see him crowned King of Hawaii, while he himself—by what means we cannot pretend to say or by reason of what understanding—would secure a rich reward if he secured an English protectorate of the islands.

As far as he was capable of loving any one Captain

Featherstone loved Marguerite Holmes, and, as his wife, he may have been willing to share, in part, with her the money he expected to get; yet, like the mercenary and unprincipled wretch that he was, he brought Kohala under the fascinating spell of the woman he imagined he loved himself, till the entanglement became inextricable.

That Marguerite Holmes encouraged him in the belief that his attentions were agreeable and that she led him to believe that she would help him to carry out his designs, and on their completion become his wife, cannot, perhaps, be truthfully denied.

But in extenuation of this it should not be forgotten that the little woman was alone in the world, her sole dependence a petty annuity, the continuance of which rested with an eccentric man, whom she hardly knew and to whom she was allied by no ties of consanguinity.

While her conduct cannot be defended from a high ethical standpoint, before we condemn we should recall that she was like the proverbial drowning man, who, in his desperate struggle for self-preservation, forgets the rights of others in his fear of death. From the imposition of pretended love, which Featherstone implored her to practice on Kohala, she stood exonerated by her conduct.

Before Kohala went to Hawaii to visit the chief Keona, unknown to Featherstone a marriage with Marguerite Holmes was performed at the palace. The Queen's party, who brought this about, kept the matter secret, intending to spring it on the people if an attempt were made to place Kohala on the throne.

The Queen's friends knew that the knowledge of such a marriage would alienate the natives and provoke the

relentless opposition of Keona, who, as has been seen, regarded Kohala as the betrothed of his daughter Leila, and with the chief's opposition the young man's chances as a ruler were a thousand times less than those of the deposed Queen.

Featherstone's purpose was to get Kohala to assert his rights to the throne, for which he did not care and which he would not have, unless it were to please the woman for whose gratification he was willing to sacrifice even life itself.

But when the captain saw all his airy castles dissolving before his gaze, and all his dreams of wealth dissipated by the very person on whose co-operation and fidelity to himself so much—everything, indeed—depended, he could not, for the time being, credit the evidence of his senses.

Forgetting the forced gallantry that had hitherto distinguished his intercourse with Marguerite Holmes, he shot out a fierce oath, and leaping to his feet, with arm raised as if he were going to strike her, he shouted out:

“Love! Lawfully wed! Woman, what do you mean?”

She looked so pale and delicate and slender as she stood there before him that Clem—who was screwing her eye to the keyhole outside—expected to see her mistress fall down in a faint, or, at least, to hear her scream; but instead, she never moved, never dropped her gaze from his red and brutally enraged face.

In a voice whose low, well-bred tones were in striking contrast with the fierce bellowing of the man, Marguerite said: “I mean what I have said.”

“That you love Kohala?”

“Ay, every hair in his head and every curve of his face.”

"And you are married to him?"

"I am."

"When did this happen?"

"Go ask Kohala. He does not lie, nor offer an insult to women who lack the brute strength of the bully. He will tell the truth, as becomes a man who is a prince and a prince who is a man."

Again Featherstone began pacing the room and pulling at his red mustache, while he shot glances at once questioning and malignant at the little woman. After a few minutes he came to a sudden halt before her and burst out:

"Merciful powers! you cannot mean this. You planned this fiction to tease me, to try me, to test me! Tell me that you did not mean it. Do that or lay me dead at your feet, for you might as well kill me in one way as in another!"

"Take me to Kohala at once, and in my presence let him speak for himself. If he says I have not told the truth I will confess that I have lied. If he says he wants to be King of Hawaii I will sustain him. If he says that henceforth he must live impoverished and in exile I will share his lot, and deem a cabin and privation heaven so that he be there."

Once more Featherstone resumed his pacing and his pulling and biting at the red mustache. Gradually the terrible truth found a resting-place in his fevered brain and forced upon him a realization of his own helpless and dangerous situation, now that the ally on whom he had counted for so much had deserted him.

Fears for his personal safety banished from his mind the fortune which he had imagined within his reach and the wife and houses that he was to count among his personal assets when he returned to England.

But he was quick to see that the woman who had blasted all his schemes had it in her power to have him arrested by the Provisional Army and subjected to the sanguinary rage of men, many of whom, in the gold hills beyond the sea, had given work to a coroner's jury for offenses mild compared with that of which he knew himself to be guilty.

Had he obeyed the impulses of his own cowardly and intensely animal nature he would have sought to coerce Marguerite Holmes into silence by intimidation and playing on her fears; but the unexpected rôle in which he now saw himself, and which was not the least element in his surprise, convinced him that it would be good policy to win her to his present purpose by means similar to those employed when he flattered himself that he was gaining her love.

With a sigh, which there was no need to affect, Captain Featherstone seemed to shrink into himself, for his head was bowed and his arms hung heavily by his side as he again halted before her and said:

"You have ruined all my prospects, and now, if you so desire—and I shall not ask you not to do so—it is in your power to hand me over to the lawless mob which is at present in possession of this unfortunate city, and let them tear me to pieces."

"I have no desire to do you an injury," she said, and her sensitive sympathies—her weakest characteristic—brought tears to the long-lashed gray eyes, till even Featherstone forgot his troubles in momentary admiration of her girlish beauty. "Whatever I can do to save you without injustice to others I shall be glad to do."

"Flossy—no, I can never call you by that dear name again—Mrs.—Mrs. Kohala, do you mean that?" and Featherstone half lifted his hand as if expecting hers to meet it, then let it fall again.

"I do."

"Will you make me one promise?"

"What is it?"

"Say that you will make it; it will bring no harm to you, and it will help me."

"If such be the case I give you the promise," she said, with characteristic impulsiveness.

"It is that you do not repeat to any living soul what I have told you about Kohala till I remove the injunction of secrecy and silence."

"I will agree to that, on one condition."

"Name the condition."

"It is that you take me at once to Kohala."

"At once?"

"Yes, at once."

"But that would be ruin."

"How so?"

"I suppose you know that you and I are watched and followed by the spies of this fellow, Loring?"

"I do not care."

"But I do. Can you not wait till after one o'clock to-morrow night? Then, if you creep quietly out and keep in the shadows, you will find me awaiting you directly in front of the Mormon Church. I shall have a native guide along, who can take us so as to avoid the guards, and within an hour you will be with your husband. What say you?"

"I say yes; but if he were not a prisoner he would come to me. All the thrones in the world could not keep Kohala from me if he were free."

"I cannot explain all to you now. But it is understood that, till you see me again, you do not tell a soul what has passed between us; and, in the next place, that you will meet me at the hour named in front of the Mormon Church, which, you know, is only a short distance away. You may remember you were curious to hear the service, and I took you there one night?"

Marguerite nodded, and after fully a minute's hesitation, as if he were debating whether to say anything further or not, Featherstone bowed stiffly and left the house.

Kohala owned a fine house in Honolulu, and here he and Featherstone lived together since he returned from abroad; there were good servants and an excellent stable attached to the establishment, and these the captain continued to enjoy during the absence of their owner.

After leaving Mrs. Holmes he went directly to this house, and his first act was to order in a bottle of brandy and some soda. He filled a goblet with a great deal of the former and very little of the latter, and drained it off without taking it from his lips. Then he lit a cigar, poured out some more brandy so as to have it within reach, dropped into a dining-room chair and shot out

a string of oaths, intended, no doubt, to relieve his overwrought feelings.

As the reader must have already surmised, with the reasons for the same, it was Featherstone who caused Kohala to be abducted immediately in front of his wife's cottage, and conveyed in a closed carriage to a secluded house far up the long valley that leads to the Pali's bloody cliffs, some eight miles from Honolulu.

Featherstone did not appear directly in this enterprise; he was far too shrewd for that; and tools suitable for his purpose, both white and brown, could be had at the lowest market rates for any such work as that.

Featherstone's plan was really very adroit. He proposed, with Marguerite to help him, to play the part of a brave liberator. But before he permitted—or, rather, Marguerite permitted—Kohala to return to Honolulu, Kohala, for her sake, would be induced to issue his pronunciamiento, declaring himself King of Hawaii.

All this was now relegated to the impossibilities, and the all-important and difficult question presented to Featherstone's mind was how to save himself when the inevitable exposure came.

He smoked with such energy that he sat amid a cloud. He was a man fertile in resources, and no tenderness of conscience ever barred him from a scheme that promised success by illegal methods.

The woman had deceived him, and he cursed her for it. It would have gladdened his savage heart to see her dead at his feet.

He reasoned that she would keep her promise of silence, and that she would meet him, as agreed. What if she and Kohala were never seen again? People would say they had eloped in some strange way. What if their dead bodies were found together, with an empty pistol clutched in Kohala's hand? People would say it was the romantic and insane end of two foolish lovers.

CHAPTER XX.

BLAKE GETS ON THE TRAIL.

FOR prudential reasons, Colonel Ellis and others who had a tender interest in the fate of Kohala, kept from the knowledge of the public the fact that he was missing; and the two daily papers, though fully appreciating the importance, as a matter of news, of the death, abduction or desertion of the young man, made no allusion to him in their columns.

The men whom Blake assigned to search the different sections of the city he had mapped out reported to him, one by one, each being forced to confess that his mission had been a failure, for the missing man had left no more sign than if the earth had opened in the darkness and swallowed him up, leaving no scar as a reminder on its surface.

This goes to prove how careful and complete had been Featherstone's plans. Indeed, Blake's suspicions as to this man's connection with the matter were the result of intuition rather than of reason.

After he had lost all hope of finding Kohala by means of the search he had instituted Blake sought out Colonel Ellis and said:

"I am going to let all the men go back to their commands and take up this matter by myself."

"But what are you going to do?" asked Colonel Ellis, whose anxiety for the safety of Kohala had preyed on him more than all the cares of the revolution and the burdens that followed it.

"I want Colonel Loring"—Loring was present—"to give me a leave of absence for as long as I may want it."

"I shall write it out now," said Colonel Loring, and he pulled up to the table and dashed off the following:

"HEADQUARTERS PROVISIONAL ARMY OF HAWAII:

To whom it may concern—The bearer, First Lieutenant Harry Blake, is detailed for special service by me, and

all officers and enlisted men connected with this command are hereby instructed to assist Lieutenant Blake in such manner as he may require or request.

“ARTHUR LORING, Colonel Commanding.”

“I don’t think I shall call upon my comrades for much help,” said Blake, as he folded up the paper and put it away in his ample breast-pocket. “This is to be a still hunt. One doesn’t go gunning for wild ducks with a brass band, as we used to say in the States.”

After leaving headquarters Blake went to a public-house down near the pier of the Union Steamship Company, and here, in a back room, he found Phipps, sober, or, rather, comparatively so, for he was in that taciturn state of inebriety when he might be said to be at his best.

Phipps, for State reasons and not because he had any fondness for the woman, had been very attentive to Clem of late, and it was through him and in consideration of Colonel Ellis’s bribes, that she was induced to tell all she knew about her mistress and to adorn her facts through her imagination, in order to give what she considered full measure for value received.

“Phipps,” said Blake, as he handed the Irishman a cigar and lit another himself, “I want you to help me.”

“I’m ready,” said Phipps.

“You know Mrs. Clem?”

“Faith, I do.”

“And you don’t love her?”

“Love her!”

“Yes.”

“Do I look like a natoral born fool?”

“Far from it, Phipps.”

“Then don’t insult a man of my taste.”

“But you’ve been sweet on her.”

“Mebby so; but be the same token, I’d be sweet on Owld Nick’s grandmother, if it would only help to annex these islands to the great United States,” said Phipps, with energy.

“I think you told me that this Mrs. Clem is attached to Featherstone?”

"And, sure, she should be; doesn't he pay her for it?"

"How much does he pay her?"

"I don't know. But why do you ask?"

"Because Featherstone called on Mrs. Holmes to-day, and if it was possible, you may depend on it that Mrs. Clem overheard their conversation, and that they spoke about the man we want to find."

"Ah, be gob, I see!" said Phipps, closing one eye.

"I was sure you would. Now, it is near dark, and you can find Mrs. Clem and have a private chat with her without exciting attention. Go to her as soon as you can and learn everything you can about this meeting and report it to me at this place at nine o'clock. If you need money let me know, and you can have all you want."

"I'll keep an account of expenses, but I have all I want for the present," said Phipps, and, full of his purpose, he started off, for it was now dusk, and the lamps and electric lights were burning as brightly as in the happiest days of Honolulu.

Promptly at nine o'clock Phipps returned and made his way to the little back room where he last saw Blake. The only occupant of the place now was a native fisherman, dressed in a blouse and straw hat and loose cotton trousers, and with the long black hair and smooth brown face that distinguish his class.

"Faith, I thought I'd be afther seein' Mr. Blake here," said Phipps, as, with a disgusted look at the Kanaka, he was about to retreat.

"Mr. Blake is here."

Phipps started. It could not be that brown man with the half-closed eyes who had so perfectly imitated the voice of his friend.

"Did you spake to me?" he said, addressing himself to the native.

"I did." And then, with a dumb laugh, Blake—for he it was—rose and gave Phipps his hand.

"Well, begorra, you take the cake!" said Phipps, stepping back and examining the disguise with intense admiration and many strong but unquotable expressions of surprise. "Sure, your own mother wouldn't know

you if she was to clap her two eyes on you this blessed minute."

"If any one else should come in, Phipps, or if you should chance to see me on the street in this disguise, you must not know me."

"No, not from a side of sole leather."

"And now tell me what you have done," said Blake, sinking his voice to the pitch he wanted the other to imitate.

"I didn't larn much, for Mrs. Clem was as close as a clam. Featherstone owns her, body and soul. She said him and the little woman had a row to-day, and that it isn't over by a long shot. And, after much coaxin', she gave me her word of honor as a lady—just think of that, Mr. Blake!—that she believed the young gentleman we are so anxious to find is alive and well."

"How did she learn that?"

"She didn't say."

"It was not from her mistress?"

"No. I'm most sure of that."

"Then, Phipps, she must have overheard Featherstone saying so."

"That's my belief."

"Good; you have found out all I want to know. If you could get Clem to drink a little wine to-night she might be more communicative; suppose you try it, Phipps."

"All right, Mr. Blake; and may you have the same good luck as a Kanaka that you always had as a white man," and, with this, the two men shook hands and parted.

Blake was so confident of his disguise that he took no pains to keep in the shadows, but sauntered through the streets with the inevitable cheroot between his lips, and evidently indifferent to the eager groups discussing the situation before the bars.

He passed the building where the sailors from the American warship were quartered, and he watched with some interest a man fastening, over the circular arch of the gateway leading into the grounds, a signboard, on

which, in gold and black letters, was the legend: "CAMP BOSTON."

Not an arrow-shot away was Kohala's house, in which he knew Featherstone still lived. Although it was a warm night the shutters were closed and the curtains were drawn; but they did not entirely conceal the glow that told there was a light on the other side, with some one to enjoy it.

Blake knew that the servants here were all men and natives and that they were devoted to Kohala, for they had been brought over to wait on him from his plantation in Hawaii after his return from abroad. But as they were a single-minded lot, and could have been easily influenced by Featherstone, he thought it advisable not to communicate with them directly.

He went back to the stable, directed thither by the low hum of voices, and he succeeded in secreting himself so as to be able to overhear all that was being said without attracting attention.

Blake was interested to learn that the subject uppermost in his mind was the one that agitated the men at the stable. In hushed and almost tearful voices they discussed the absence of their master, and one of them, evidently voicing the sentiments of his companions, said:

"If our master does not come back in two more suns I shall run off and make my way home to my wife in Hawaii. I do not like this white man, and my heart would be lighter if he was away and Kohala was here."

"This was said in the Hawaiian tongue, otherwise Featherstone, who had advanced from the house through the darkness without being seen and with as little noise as if he were a shadow, must have heard this opinion of himself.

Addressing the group of men, who huddled together as if frightened as soon as they became aware of his presence, Featherstone said:

"I am going away, and may not be back till near daylight. Do you hear me, Kam?"

"Ye—yes, sa, I heah yo'," said one of the men, with

an accent very much like that of a plantation negro in the Cotton States.

Kam was Kohala's major-domo, a big, gentle, single-hearted fellow, who, till the return of his young master, had never been off the great sugar plantation on Hawaii since he was born there, thirty-five years before.

"And, Kam?"

"Yes, sa."

"Don't leave the house."

"Oh, no, sa; I no leave."

"And if any one calls and asks for me you tell them I am asleep and feeling very sick. Do you understand that, Kam?"

"Oh, yes, sa; I on'stan'," said the man.

Blake, who was crouching close up against the stable wall, expected to hear Featherstone saying something that would indicate his departure, but he could not catch even the fall of his feet. He had evidently gone as quickly and mysteriously as he had come, and the natives must have known it, for they resumed their low-voiced use of their liquid, full-voweled mother tongue.

Featherstone had gone, not back to the house certainly, but in what direction Blake was, for the instant, at a loss to determine.

Again that peculiar intuition, that does not come through reasoning, but which, no matter how manifested, is genius, came to Blake's help. With a sense as fine and acute as the bloodhound's, and which led him, instead of his directing it, he sprang lightly and noiselessly over the hedge and into the street. Without an instant's hesitation he turned his back to the city's lights and started out the street that led to the Punch Bowl, or which, for some distance, might be taken by those walking or driving to the great Pali Cliff.

There was nothing ahead, nothing behind him, nothing in sight to impel him to this course, yet he was as sure of his ground as if the midday sun were blazing down on the form of Featherstone a few paces in the advance.

Blake knew that Featherstone, like most Englishmen,

was an excellent pedestrian, and that once he was outside the city's limits and where there was no necessity for care he would walk with great rapidity; but in that the man on his trail was quite his equal, in addition to having superior powers of endurance.

It did not take Blake long to leave the city behind him, and a silent, deserted road in front. Here and there, to the right and left, he could see a light in the little frame house of a Portuguese gardener, that industrious and thrifty people owning and cultivating much of the land on either side of the road along which he sped.

He wore felt shoes that were even more noiseless in their fall than the bare feet would have been. Now and then Blake stopped to listen, sometimes placing his ear to the ground, like an Indian on the trail who knows that the solid earth is a better conductor of sound than the air.

After each examination Blake hurried on with increased speed, which was an assurance of his increasing confidence.

At length, and after having gone over a distance at least two miles from the city's limit, he slackened his pace and advanced with greater caution.

It was a clear, starlit night, and the air was as still as if it had gone to sleep, so that even the droning of an occasional beetle or the whiz of a passing bat made a loud and disturbing noise.

The pawing and impatient snorting of horses at a halt at length brought Blake's cautious advance to a stop.

He was about to move on again in the direction of the animals—they might have strayed into the highway from their pastures—when he heard the penetrating, sibilant whispering of men in front.

Down on hands and knees he dropped and crept rapidly forward till he was within twenty feet of the men, whose dark forms could be seen against the stars as they stood beside their horses.

"Very well, Pedro, we can discuss this as we go on. Mount, my man, for there is no time to lose."

Blake recognized Featherstone's voice. From the name

"Pedro" he inferred that the other man was a Portuguese. He had just reached this conclusion, and was deploring the fact that he was on foot, when the two men sprang into their saddles with the ease of skilled horsemen and galloped away in the direction of the Pali.

CHAPTER XXI.

KOHALA'S SITUATION.

THE plan to kidnap Kohala was not made on the spur of the moment. For a long time Featherstone had thought of it as an alternative to which he might be forced in the event of the Americans deposing the Queen.

Through his emissaries, the night of the revolution, he kept track of the young man from the time he went to the rendezvous where the troops under Colonel Loring assembled up to the minute that he was sent with the message to Colonel Ellis at the Hawaiian Hotel.

The looked-for opportunity came just when Kohala, disappointed at not finding Marguerite Holmes at home, left the cottage and turned into the dark street encumbered with the building material of the new Episcopal church, which prevented its being a thoroughfare at night.

Featherstone had a closed carriage in waiting, and he was inside the carriage when two masked men, with pistols in their right hands, forced Kohala inside.

Featherstone was playing the part of prisoner. He had been seized in the same way, so he told Kohala, and what the outcome of it was to be he did not know; but he was sure that the Americans were at the bottom of the outrage and that he was made a victim because he was the friend of Kohala, whom they wanted to get out of the way so that there might be no obstacle to their scheme of annexation.

"But," said Featherstone, as the carriage, with the blinds pulled down, sped out of the illuminated streets

and into the dark country, "I have always been ready to lay down my life for you, and if it comes to that now I shall not flinch from the sacrifice; all I ask is that they save yourself so that some day you may inherit your rights."

Kohala believed this implicitly, and more worldly men, finding themselves in the same position, would have shown the same credulity.

He believed that the captain was a prisoner, and he regretted it more than he did the danger that threatened himself, for his friend's suffering was because of his fidelity, and Kohala had a royal appreciation of this quality.

Of late he had not felt as warmly toward Featherstone as he did before their coming to Hawaii.

He did not like his monarchical tendencies; but, above all, he did not like the familiar way in which he spoke of Marguerite Holmes. But now, with youthful generosity, he chided himself for ever having harbored an unkind thought of this noble and devoted friend.

It should be said that as soon as Kohala was seized his pistol was taken from him, and he was threatened with instant death if he made an outcry or attempted to escape. Featherstone had the same story to tell, and he gave it as his opinion that the purpose of their captors was to hold them for a ransom.

"Though," he said, with his mouth close to Kohala's ear as the carriage rolled on, "it may be that these men are your warmest adherents, and that their purpose is to get you away from the influence of the Americans and make you King of Hawaii in spite of yourself."

To this Kohala made no response. He knew that the men who made him prisoner were Portuguese, and he believed that the Queen's party were responsible for the outrage.

After two hours' rapid driving the road became so rough that the horses were brought down to a walk, and then Kohala learned, from the sounds behind, that they were being followed by two mounted men.

The beating of branches against the carriage roof and the crashing under the wheels and the horses' feet told

that they were going through a dense underbrush and over a route that had not been much traveled.

It was to Kohala, who was consumed by curiosity rather than fear, as if the sun had gone down for the last time. It seemed an age since he had parted from Colonel Ellis and a year of black torture since he had entered this jolting vehicle.

At length the carriage halted, and the barking of a pack of curs told that they were in the neighborhood of a house, a fact that was soon confirmed by the flashing of lights and the stamping of many feet on a wide piazza.

A man with a perforated tin lantern came to the carriage door, and, pulling it open, he said, with a foreign accent:

"This is the place, gentlemen; get out."

They were conducted into the house, which, though in a state of decay, looked as if it had at one time been a place of some pretensions.

"Now, gentlemen," said the man with the lantern, "I can assure you both that if you remain quiet and make no attempt to get away you will be kindly treated. We must keep you in separate rooms, and you need not be afraid of sleeping till you are entirely rested."

"May I ask why you have brought us here?" asked Kohala.

"You are free to ask any questions you choose; but to-night, at least, you will get no answers," said the man with the lantern.

Kohala was conducted to a bedroom in a wing of the building; but as he shook hands with Featherstone, who saw fit to affect depression, he whispered to him:

"Do not lose heart, captain; depend on it, our friends will be sure to find us and all will be well again."

As soon as Kohala had been taken out of sight and hearing Featherstone burst into a fit of laughter, and, grasping the hand of the man who had been officiating with the lantern, he said:

"Well, Pedro, old man, that worked like a charm. Never saw anything neater since I was born. Come, let us celebrate the event with a stiff glass of brandy, and

be quick about it, for I must be home and in my little bed before daylight."

"Pedro was evidently the master of the establishment and the father of the pretty dark-eyed girl who brought in the brandy and water, and whom Featherstone tried to compliment by saying she was fit to be the wife of a king, and adding:

"And who knows but you may be a queen yet, sweet Annetta."

The girl laughed and showed her white teeth in a way that told her delight with the flattery. She evidently knew that her father and Featherstone wished to be alone, for as soon as she had set the liquor and glasses before them she bowed and withdrew.

"Now, Pedro," said Featherstone, after they had drained their glasses and he had risen and was buttoning up his coat, "remember we are playing for big stakes."

"Trust me not to forget," said Pedro, with a knowing shake of the bushy, black head and an uninviting exhibition of tobacco-stained teeth.

"Take good care of our young friend and see that he does not get out of your sight. Of course, he will want to know why he is held here, and, of course, you will impress on him the fact that you are acting under orders and that it is for his own good and safety."

"Oh, I understand all that. If there's any mistake, captain, it won't be through me. I don't swear and bluster like you English and Americans, but I think and I act," and Pedro tapped his forehead and winked one eye to show that he thought himself quite as quick and clever as he did the man advising him.

With a perfect understanding as to what was to be done in the case of expected and unexpected emergencies Featherstone went out to the carriage in which he and Kohala had come and was driven back to the city.

The bedroom in which Kohala found himself was, or, rather, had been, elaborately furnished. But the great four-poster bed, with its yellow canopy and torn mosquito netting, the chairs with the upholstery stained and ragged, the heavy curtains that suggested insect flights and dust clouds if they were touched, and the

floor, covered with faded Turkish rugs, all bespoke a day of luxury, if not of taste, that had long since departed. Kohala was something of a fatalist; perhaps it would describe him more accurately to say he was a philosopher. He realized that he was tired, and that neither fretting nor personal effort could better his situation, so he wisely took off his coat and boots, extinguished the light and threw himself on the bed.

It was an occasion, if ever one had come in his life, when he could not fairly be charged with selfishness if he gave all his thoughts to the situation in which he was placed and the dangers that unquestionably threatened him; but instead, he thought of Marguerite, the wife whom he had not seen since the hour when they were married, and he, with his joyous secret locked close in his heart, started off to visit the woman to whom he had been betrothed without his own consent.

As he thought it over he became more and more convinced that he had done an unwise thing in keeping his secret from Colonel Ellis; but never, from first to last, did he regret the act that made the woman he loved his wife. Had it not been for his capture he would have told Colonel Ellis what he had done the morning following the revolution, and if the colonel and others objected, as he expected they would do, he was resolved to sell out his property and take his wife to any country she preferred, for no matter where it might be between the Equator and the Poles he felt he would be happy with her.

All his love for Hawaii, and his readiness to aid her through any sacrifice but one, remained. In one thing, his marriage, in which he was himself the most profoundly interested, he could not, as a free man, permit others to interfere; and who will say that he was not right?

From thoughts of Marguerite he gradually drifted off into dreams of her, and sleep accomplished what would have been impossible to him if awake, for it brought her to his side.

When he awoke the sun was shining in through the faded curtains, and an old, wrinkled woman, Pedro's

mother, was moving about the room like a sprightly, light-footed ghost that by some means had got into the wrong body.

As soon as the old woman saw that the young man was awake she darted out of the room, as if alarmed at the sight; but in less than a minute she was back again with a little plaited tray on which was a cup of coffee and some crackers.

"Eat some, then you feel good." Having said this, the old woman sat down the tray and again darted out.

Kohala dressed, by putting on his coat and pulling on his boots, then he went to one of the two windows, and, pushing back the faded curtains, looked out.

The prospect was not inviting. A high hill shut out the view a few hundred yards away. A few scraggy palms, towering over a great expanse of that curse of the islands, yellow lantana, looked as if they had strayed up from the shore and were hopelessly lost. There were lemon and orange trees, sadly in need of pruning, near the house, and some sickly decorative plants and flowers that looked as if they had grown weary of the struggle for existence under the most depressing difficulties.

He saw a number of lean yellow curs and draggle-tailed chickens scurrying through the weeds, and he heard in the distance the neighing of a horse.

He was about to let the curtains fall and turn back to the coffee when two villainous-looking men, with heavy black beards and long black hair, came to view, and, as they halted for consultation under a palm, one of them drew a long knife from his belt and gave an outlet to his energy by slashing into the bark.

CHAPTER XXII.

A PLACE OF MANY MYSTERIES.

THE man who never knows fear cannot be truthfully called a brave man. He only is brave who, despite his

fear of the danger, resolutely dares to face it. The sight of the man under the palm was not calculated to allay the suspicions of Kohala as to the difficulties that environed him; yet, even when he saw that the men noticed him and moved away, as if annoyed at their discovery, his color did not change nor did his heart beat faster.

When the men had disappeared in the jungle of underbrush Kohala stepped back and drank his coffee and ate the crackers without any sign of agitation.

He found appliances for washing and combing his hair, though they were newer and cheaper, and so not in keeping with the furnishings of the dingy old apartment.

He had finished brushing his wavy black hair when he heard a rap at the door, and, before he could speak the "come in" that rose to his lips, it was opened, and Annetta, looking like a bacchante, with a wreath of crimson flowers about her blue-black hair, entered, and, with a blush that added to the healthy beauty of her face and a bow that told she was not versed in that manner of salutation, she said:

"May it please Your Majesty, breakfast is ready."

"Majesty!" repeated Kohala, with amused surprise, "why, my young friend, I am not a king."

"No, sir," said Annetta, with more confidence, "but you can be one whenever you say the word, and that's the same thing."

"It may be—and then it may not; but we will let that pass. What is your name?"

"Annetta."

"Annetta what?"

"Just Annetta, if Your Majesty pleases."

"Have you a father?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"What is his name?"

"Pedro, may it please you."

"Pedro what?"

"That is all, sir."

"No surname?"

"I do not know what that is."

"What is your nationality?"

"I do not know."

"Where were you born?"

"In Honolulu."

"And your father?"

"He is a Portuguese."

"What is the name of this place?"

"May it please Your Majesty, it has none."

"Upon my word," said Kohala, with a laugh that seemed to fascinate the girl, "you appear to have a mysterious dearth of names here. But you said something about breakfast."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"Why do you call me 'Your Majesty'?"

"Because I was told to do so."

"By whom?"

"My father."

"Does he own this place?"

"I do not know."

"Is he here?"

"No, sir."

"Where is he?"

"I do not know."

"Well, Annetta, I shall not try further to exhaust your information, though I am sorry to see it is sadly limited in the directions that most interest me."

The girl had evidently been instructed as to what she must do and say, for she held the door open for Kohala to pass out, and, as soon as he had done so, she darted ahead and led him into a little apartment that showed signs of having been recently fitted up as a private dining-room.

He found the table set for one. He expected to see Featherstone, for the true state of affairs never dawned on him, and as he was not there, he asked Annetta the reason, and was answered by a shrug of the shoulders and the same "I do not know, sir."

Kohala made no further investigations. The breakfast was ample, varied and well-cooked and served, Annetta being the only person he saw during the meal.

As soon as he had finished breakfast his pretty attendant, who seemed delighted to be able to wait on him,

led him into still another apartment off the dining-room, and said:

"This is Your Majesty's parlor, and you will find good cigars on the table, and there is wine over in that closet, and some books in the one near it, if Your Majesty cares to read. And if you should want anything further please to ring this little bell and I shall come to you, for I will be in waiting in the next room and anxious to serve you."

Having delivered herself of this little speech, which sounded as if she had repeated it over before and was not quite certain of the part, Annetta bowed again, blushed becomingly and was about to leave, when Kohala called to her:

"Wait a moment, Annetta."

"Yes, Your Majesty," and she turned and bowed, as if that, too, were something she had been instructed not to forget in her intercourse with the young man.

"You treat me as if I were a prince."

"And so you are, Your Majesty."

"Then I must be a free man and so at liberty to walk about these grounds as I choose." Seeing that she looked doubting and confused, he added: "But perhaps I am a prisoner? If so, I have no fault to find with my jailer, though I can't say so much for my captors."

Annetta did not understand his compliment, but she never lost sight of the part that had been assigned her.

"If Your Majesty pleases," she said, "it will be better that you should remain in the house."

"In what way better?"

"It will be safer."

"Then there is danger outside?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"Guards?"

"Oh, yes, but—"

"But what, Annetta? Speak out."

"If Your Majesty were to go outside and any harm were to come to you the blame would fall on me."

"Who would blame you?"

"I cannot tell you names."

"Very well. Can you tell me where the gentleman is

who was brought here a prisoner with me last night?"

"I cannot."

"You are ordered not to: is that it?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"But you can tell me, surely, if he is living and well?"

"He is living and well, Your Majesty," and fearing to say more, if, indeed, she had not already said too much, Annetta left the room.

Kohala lit a cigar—it was a good one—and feeling that the only wise course left him was to remain quiet and await developments, he got a book out of the closet and threw himself on the sofa. His getting the book was the result of habit, for he never looked into it, but laid it on his breast, closed his eyes, and, with his fingers interlocked about his head, he gave free rein to his speculations.

Now and then he rose and took a turn about the room, or looked out through the grimy windows at the dreary prospect outside; but he never did so without seeing the two men whom he first noticed under the palm that morning.

The fact that the men who took his pistol from him the night before left him his wallet and watch convinced him that they were not ordinary robbers, though he did not lose sight of the fact that it was in their power to get possession of these articles any time they wanted them.

His watch had never been such company nor had he ever consulted it so often before in the same space of time. He was looking at its face and saw it was one o'clock when Annetta again came in to tell him that luncheon awaited him in the adjoining room.

"You are very kind, Annetta," he said; "but I am sorry to have troubled you, for I do not feel at all hungry."

"Is Your Majesty ill?" she asked, with unaffected anxiety.

"Could you expect any man to feel well in my position, Annetta? Would you feel well and happy if you were in my place?"

Her lips trembled and she hesitated, then she said, though it evidently was not what she had intended saying:

"If you will not go to luncheon, then there are some men who would like to speak with Your Majesty."

"Who are they?"

"They are your friends, but I cannot tell their names."

"Very well, Annetta, in Heaven's name show them in, and if there is any 'worst' to this thing they may be able to tell me what it is."

Annetta went to the door, whispered to some one outside, then the cracked voice of the old woman was heard calling to a third party, in a language Kohala did not understand, and this was followed by the tramping of heavily shod feet on a bare wooden floor.

The tramping came nearer, and Kohala looked up to see five men entering the room, with Pedro, whom he recognized as the man who had carried the lantern, at their head. The young man noticed, further, that his visitors all had big black beards of exactly the same cut, and as these appendages did not match their hair and faces, he came to the conclusion that they were assumed for the purpose of disguise.

Kohala rose, and his visitors respectfully stood before him in line, with their eyes fixed humbly on the hats which they held in their hands.

"Your Majesty," began Pedro, "we are all your true, good friends, and we've come here to talk with you and to tell you that it's because we love you that we took you away last night from people—from the Americans—that we know are your enemies."

"I suppose I should feel very grateful to you for this extremely thoughtful precaution," said Kohala, his sarcasm entirely wasted on the men before him, "and particularly in showing me that the people I have been regarding as friends are, in truth, my enemies. Of course, you have informed the Americans that you brought me here and why you did it?"

Not at all abashed by this, Pedro replied:

"No, we haven't; there'll be plenty of time to act when Your Majesty gives the word."

"But I am not a majesty," said Kohala, with less patience than he had shown to Annetta when she addressed him in the same way.

"No; but you will be a king as soon as you say the word, and that's why we are here," said Pedro, with the confident manner of a man sure of his ground.

"But whom do you represent?"

"We represent the foreign element on these islands; and outside, waiting to see Your Majesty, are a score of Hawaiians, who represent a large majority of all the natives."

"And what is your purpose and theirs?"

"We want you to proclaim your rights."

"What do you mean?"

"We know, and Your Majesty knows, you are the rightful sovereign of Hawaii. You may not want to be king, but the people want it, and you owe it to them to speak out."

"I might as well have it over with both parties at once," said Kohala. "Show my countrymen in."

"Before doing that, Your Majesty, and before making up your mind, which it's necessary to be careful about, it is right that I should tell you that if you refuse the wishes of these people who are so ready to lay down their lives for you, that they may come to look on you as a traitor to their cause, and then I would not want to be responsible for what they may do," said Pedro.

There was no misunderstanding this. It presented the case to Kohala in an entirely new, and by no means an alluring, aspect.

Whether the men in the room or the natives waiting outside represented the elements they claimed to or no, Kohala felt that they were desperate—his own capture warranted that belief—and that if he did not comply or seem to comply with their demands he might be disposed of, as had one of his ancestors a few generations back.

He had sufficient self-command to conceal his nervousness and the quickness of thought that under such circumstances is a mark of true greatness.

"Show in my countrymen," he said, "and let us talk like friends."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A TRYING SITUATION.

ALTHOUGH he had seen much of the world in a geographical sense, Kohala was a child in his judgment of men, and, like all guileless and impulsive natures, he was influenced by exteriors and inclined to believe that all men—at least, those to whom he gave his esteem—were as honest and truthful as himself.

He saw, or thought he saw, the reason for his being abducted from Honolulu, and so, while he could not reconcile himself to the treatment, he regarded it with less indignation when he came to think that it was done for what these devoted but mistaken people thought to be for his own good.

Not so much to avert the danger that might threaten himself as to save his friends from excesses that might result in their own ruin, Kohala made up his mind not to oppose them; but at the same time not to commit himself to a course which, if followed out on the lines of its initiation, would defeat its own purpose.

He could not know that Pedro and his countrymen, entirely indifferent to the form of government in Hawaii, were working for the reward which, in addition to a guarantee, Featherstone was to pay them in the event of success.

Delighted and surprised at Kohala's frankness, Pedro suggested that they adjourn to the large dining-room where there would be space for the whole party to assemble.

This being agreed to, Kohala was escorted to a larger room near by, the antique furniture of which told of better and cleaner days. Annetta escorted in the natives, not one of whom Kohala could recall having ever seen before; but they looked to be respectable, earnest men, and they saluted him, as was the custom of old in saluting a king, by touching their right hands to the ground and then laying them on their bowed heads.

Kohala was given a large chair at the head of the

table, and, as there were not chairs enough, the others stood up in a line about the wall.

The silence that followed was becoming embarrassing when Pedro, who stood at the foot of the table, and who, as proprietor of the place, if not from his belief in his own superior intelligence, appointed himself master of ceremonies, said, for the benefit of the newcomers:

"I have told Kohala of Hawaii that, as we have no longer a queen and do not want the Americans to rule us, that we now regard him as our king, quite as much as if we saw him seated on the throne established by his great ancestor, Kamehameha, in Honolulu."

The black eyes of the natives took in fire while Pedro was speaking, and at the conclusion they threw up their arms like one man and shouted till the old rafters rang with the echoes:

"Long live Kohala of Hawaii!"

A tall native with iron-gray hair, an erect figure and a scar across his bronzed brow that added to his military aspect, advanced to the foot of the table, and, after bowing very low to Kohala, cast a quick glance at his companions, as if to invoke their attention, and said, with the voice and manner of a natural born orator:

"Last night messengers from Keona of Hawaii came to this island of Oahu to get the voice of the people and to learn how many of us were ready to renounce Queen Liliuokalani and to give allegiance to Kohala. I speak only for those whom I know, and in my sixty years of life, during which our people have dwindled to one-half, I think I can say I know all the living and remember the many dead of those many seasons.

"The Queen is of our race, yet she shows her contempt for us by marrying Dominis, a white man, and, except the few who feed on her crumbs, we do not like her; and now that she is down, we rejoice in her fall, though no native hand was raised to bring it about, and we can never submit to the rule of the white men who have de-throned her.

"I remember the day when Kohala was born in Hawaii, for I was then in the employ, as a herdsman, of the great chief, his father. There was much rejoicing

among the people on the pastures and on the plantations that day, and they said, one to the other: 'Courage, for the child is born who will yet save us, and, from the throne of the great Conqueror, make us happy.'

"I recall the night, in the sacred cavern up by the lake of fire, when Kohala of Hawaii was betrothed to the little daughter of the chief Keona. When the sun rose in the morning it saw us feasting by the sea, and the maidens danced and sang about the flower bowers where slept the children on whom our future depended.

"Since that day we have watched and prayed for Kohala. We did not like it when, as a boy, he went beyond the great world of waters from which the sun rises; but we became reconciled when we reasoned that there lay the land of the white man and that there our prince would learn the ways that have made the white man our master and use them so that we should become, at least, his equal.

"Since Kohala's return there has come to us the story that he, too, would wed among the whites; but we did not, we could not believe it, for we knew his race and that the son would die ere he broke the pledge of the father.

"And now we have come to council with our prince, who needs but to say the word and he will be our king. Swift runners await within call to spread the news of his declaration through Oahu, and boats with lowered sails await the messengers who are to carry the glad tidings to our sister islands. If we would succeed there is no time to lose. A minute's hesitation may be fatal. What says Kohala of Hawaii?"

There was no mistaking this man's earnestness, and had he made no allusion to marriage Kohala might have been more thrilled by the patriotic fervor of his adherent.

But he had taken a step which he would not retrace if he could. He had deliberately turned his back on a throne, for which he did not care, to be the husband of a woman who was more to him than all else in life.

Had he obeyed the impulse that came on him with a force that it cost a powerful effort to resist he would have told the old orator and his friends, then and there,

that he did not want to be the king of Hawaii; and, further, that he had, as a man, ignored the pledge made for him by his father when he was a child; but he felt that if he were to do so the men who were ready to worship him as the possible savior of their country would, in their wild fury at the discovery, destroy him as a traitor. That he had the tact that is often more potent than valor was shown by his reply. He determined not to refer to his marriage, nor to the fact that he regarded himself as a prisoner, but to show that the action of Keona in getting the voice of the people as to their choice of a ruler showed that a new and better method of selecting sovereigns had come to Hawaii.

But, adroit though this was, it did not satisfy Pedro or the natives. They wanted Kohala to at once claim the throne by proclamation, as the only way of getting it at all.

"No," said Kohala, his patience at length threatening to give way, "I can make no proclamation from this place. Here I am virtually a prisoner. I am not blind to this fact, though you treat me as a king. I will not say that you are not all entirely honest in your purpose; but if I am fit to rule when king my opinions should have weight while I am a private citizen. I see you agree to that. Very well, when I am assured that a majority of the people in these islands want me then I shall act, but not before. That is my answer, and it is folly longer to take up your time in discussion."

The men looked at each other in a disappointed way. True, Kohala had not absolutely rejected their advice, but he had not accepted it, as they thought he would. The more impulsive of the natives had been talking of a war under the lead of the young king, and so those who heard him were inclined to think that his caution was cowardice, and that contact with the whites had made him effeminate.

The impression that he was still a prisoner was verified when Pedro and two of his countrymen escorted him back to the little sitting-room assigned him by Annetta that morning, and where he was told he must "please remain for the present."

The natives lived near by in the Nuuanu Valley, where their thatched huts were set amid plantations of bananas.

At the head of this valley, and only two miles away, though Kohala had only the vaguest idea of his whereabouts, there was the appalling precipice of the Pali, with the fair heights of Lanihuli smiling down on the scene of Kamehameha's last battle for united Hawaii.

When night came Kohala was permitted to take a walk, accompanied by Pedro, who, in his earnestness to earn the reward offered by Featherstone, tried again to impress the young man with the necessity for issuing a proclamation at once. And on his part, Kohala, still loyal to the man he thought his friend, sought in vain to learn what had become of the captain. The only assurance he could get, and that was far from convincing, was that the Englishman was safe and that he had gone away that morning with the natives to try and direct matters to his—Kohala's—advantage.

Annetta, evidently infatuated with her father's detained guest, did everything in her power to make him comfortable, and she showed an inclination to remain talking with him that might have flattered him had not her purpose to impress him favorably brought more vividly before him the sweet face of the wife from whom he had been parted at the altar.

Driven to desperation by the danger and uncertainty of his situation Kohala made up his mind to make one effort for freedom that night.

Apart from removing his boots he did not undress, but threw himself on the bed, determined to get out through the window after midnight.

Despite his efforts to keep awake he dropped off to sleep. He was aroused by the tramping of heavy feet, and, looking up, he saw by the flash of a lantern that Featherstone, with a look of indescribable hate in his face, was bending over him.

Kohala, who had been dreaming of escape, sprang from the bed, and the two men stood looking at each other, Featherstone being the first to speak:

"They let me go away to help you," he stammered, "and I have just got back."

"Got back from where?" asked Kohala, and he pulled on his boots and glanced up at his visitor, whose face looked livid in the light of the lantern, which he still held as high as his head, though the expression of hate had vanished from his bloodshot eyes.

"From Honolulu," said Featherstone, evidently surprised at the energetic manner of his young friend.

"And they let you go there?"

"They did."

"Then you told my friends of my situation?"

"No. I had to pledge myself to these people that I would not see Colonel Ellis. But I did see Mrs. Holmes."

"And how is she?" asked Kohala, eagerly.

"She seems to be well."

"And you told her I was here?"

"I did not."

"You did not?"

"No."

"May I ask the reason?"

"Because she had so much to tell of herself that she had no time to make inquiries after you," said Featherstone, and he set the lantern down and faced Kohala.

"The meeting does not seem to have sweetened your temper, Captain Featherstone," said Kohala, with dignity. "But it strikes me as not a little strange that you, claiming to be my friend, have been given your liberty and that you have not used it to get me out of this place."

"Yes, Kohala, I have been your friend, and your true friend; but I have just learned that you are not worthy the confidence I have given you and the efforts I have made for your elevation."

"I certainly do not understand you, captain."

"Then I shall be plainer."

"I wish you would."

"Without saying one word to me about it, you got married."

"I certainly did not think your consent to my marriage at all essential to make it binding, nor do I think so now. May I ask who gave you the information?"

"The lady herself."

"My wife tells only the truth."

"Ha! are you sure she is your wife?"

"I am certain."

"And that she has not another husband living?"

"You dare not intimate as much to me," said Kohala, his eyes ablaze with indignation. "You insult me, when you dare to reflect on the integrity of the woman I have made my wife! But if she were what you intimate—and you know you lie in your throat when you say it—then you must have known it when you introduced me and did all in your power to keep us together! Featherstone, I am neither blind nor a fool. Much that has puzzled me seems clear as daylight now. You need not frown. I do not fear you. Go!" and Kohala pointed imperiously to the door; and Featherstone, not daring to trust himself longer, for he was clutching at the stock of the pistol in his pocket, went out to consult with Pedro, who was awaiting him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BLAKE UNDERSTANDS HUMAN NATURE.

NOT Richard himself, at Bosworth Field, wished for a horse more earnestly than did Blake, when, in the darkness, he heard Featherstone and his companion riding away.

He knew that it would be folly to try to follow them on foot, so he stood still till the pounding of the horses' hoofs died out in the direction of the Nuuanu Valley, and from this he inferred that the young man he was in search of was concealed up in that direction.

Feeling that he had accomplished something, Blake made his way back to the city, and, like a prudent man who understood that his success depended on keeping up his strength, he found his own quarters and went to bed.

The next morning he called on Colonel Ellis and reported all that had happened the previous evening. On hearing that Featherstone was possibly responsible for

Kohala's abduction the colonel, who knew from the guards that the man had been seen coming into the city early that morning, was for arresting him at once.

"I think that would defeat our plans, if, indeed, it did not result in the death of the man we are so anxious to save," said Blake. "If we seize Featherstone he will deny everything and appeal to the English Consul for protection. No, colonel, we must follow the fellow up and catch him red-handed. I think I see through his game, and if I am right, it is a bold and a deep one; but we can beat him at his own tricks. Just leave it to me."

At this point Colonel Loring came in, and when he heard Blake's story and suggestions he said:

"I am quite willing to trust Blake in this matter. I hope, however, that his confidence in himself will not lead him to attempt too much alone."

"No, colonel," said Blake, "if I find that help is needed I have your authority to get it, and depend on me to do so. I can tell you no more of my purpose, or, rather, of what I propose to do, for it may be modified by new conditions at any moment."

Blake was not a man of impulses, yet he confessed to his friend that some of his best work, when chief of police, had been done through unpremeditated acts. He left the Hawaiian Hotel, and so absorbed was he in what was uppermost in his mind that he gave no heed to the direction he was taking till he suddenly started, like one waking from a vivid dream, and found himself directly in front of the large cottage, a part of which he knew to be occupied by Marguerite Holmes.

He had often seen and admired the dainty little Englishwoman on the streets; but, as their lines of life lay wide apart, he had never spoken to her. Acting on the sudden impulse, he determined to do so now. "If no other good comes of it," he reasoned, as he made his way to the door, "I shall, at least, be able to tell whether it is Featherstone or Kohala who is the favored man."

Clem, looking more grim and prim than ever, answered Blake's ring, and in reply to his question if her mistress was in she asked, snappishly:

"Well, what if she is; who'll I say wants to see her?"

"Lieutenant Blake of the Provisional Army. I have no card."

The title had a soothing effect on Clem, for she unbent her face, if not her form, and strode rather than walked away, leaving Blake outside the closed door.

Presently she came back and said:

"Yes, sir; Mrs. Holmes is in, and she'll see you."

Blake was conducted into the sitting-room, and he was about to take a chair when Marguerite entered, looking very pretty and very pale, and with such an expression of helplessness in the long-lashed gray eyes as aroused the gallant fellow's sympathies at once.

"Mr. Blake, I believe; I am Mrs.—Mrs. Holmes," said Marguerite, and she waved him back to the chair from which he had risen.

Blake was not a vain man, and therefore was not given to pride himself on anything; but if he had been inclined to boast he might, with truth, have laid claims to a pretty thorough knowledge of what the world calls "human nature." He was favorably impressed by the slender little creature; her very helplessness appealing powerfully to his confidence, so he determined at once to be more direct than he ordinarily would have been.

"When you learn my mission, Mrs. Holmes," he said, "I am sure you will be quite ready to pardon what may seem to you like an intrusion."

"I can assure you," she said, with a bow and a sad little smile, "that I do not consider your presence an intrusion."

"Thanks. Now may I ask if you know Captain Featherstone?"

"Yes. I know him," she replied.

"He is a countryman of yours?"

"Yes, I believe he is English."

"How long have you known him?"

"I met him on the steamer, the *Monowai*, coming from San Francisco to Honolulu. Kohala was with him." There was a perceptible tremor in Marguerite's voice as she mentioned the dearly loved name.

"Ah, yes, Kohala!" exclaimed Blake, for that was the

subject he proposed leading up to, but she had saved him the trouble.

"Do you know anything of him? Tell me! Is there any news of him?"

There was that in the woman's voice and manner that told Blake the true situation quite as accurately as if she had taken him into her confidence and confessed her love.

"I am searching for Kohala now," said Blake, determined to come to the point at once. "You want to have him found?"

"Oh, God only knows how I do!" she cried, and she interlocked her fingers and compressed her lips as if to keep from breaking down.

"You can help me," he said.

"I?"

"Yes, you, madam, if you will."

"Then tell me how! Command me, and if it will help Kohala to have me walk the island on my hands and knees I am ready to do it. Why, sir, this thing has been killing me ever since I heard of it."

"Mrs. Holmes, you saw Featherstone late last night?"

"I did."

"And he spoke to you about Kohala?"

"He did."

"What did he say?"

"I—I cannot tell you."

"Why not, if you are so interested in the missing man?"

"I had to promise that I would not."

"Featherstone?"

"Yes."

"Then you do know where Kohala is?"

"If I did I should be with him. It is by keeping the secret that I can see him. But I must not break my pledge."

"An unwise pledge is better broken than kept. But you say you are to see Kohala?"

"That is promised me."

"And when is the promise to be kept?"

"To-night."

"At what hour?"

"It will be after midnight."

"And the man comes here?"

"No; I meet him."

"Where?"

"In front of the Mormon Church."

"Thanks. Now one more question, Mrs. Holmes."

"You can ask me a thousand. Oh, this doubt has distracted me!" she cried, with her hands pressed to her eyes.

"You do not admire Featherstone, then?"

"No; I loathe him."

"And yet you are willing to intrust yourself to his protection."

"What else can I do? I shall die if I do not see Kohala!" And in her excitement she rose and began to pace the room.

"I think," said Blake, speaking very slowly, as was his habit when he came to a conclusion, "that I see through the situation very clearly. When you are with Featherstone to-night—and I believe it will help if you can keep the appointment—I shall try to arrange matters so that aid will not be far off if you need it. But don't lose heart. When things are at their worst, they say, they begin to mend. I thank you for this interview, and if you wouldn't mind making another pledge I'd like you to promise me that you won't say anything to Featherstone about my coming here."

"I promise that from my heart; and I shall pray Heaven to prosper your brave efforts for me and mine," she said, as she gave Blake her hand when he rose to go.

As the door had been left open and this conversation was carried on in low tones Clem, who had passed and repassed in the hope of being able to overhear something that might be sold to advantage, was grievously disappointed.

Marguerite, her heart greatly relieved by Blake's visit, for there was that in the manner of the man that gave her confidence, went to her own room and lay down.

She had had no sleep the night before. How could she sleep with such a load on her heart? Featherstone's promise had brought her no comfort. Indeed, the more she

thought over her meeting with him the more she regretted the impulse that led her to agree to his proposition.

She had been dreading the expedition that night, not for the danger there might be in it to herself, for she was driven to recklessness, but for the sake of Kohala. The more she reflected the stronger became her conviction that Featherstone was leading her into a trap. But the coming of Blake had given strength to her body and hope to her heart, if not rest to her mind, so that, without any idea of doing so, she dozed off, and was sleeping when Clem called her to dinner six hours afterward.

After dinner she tried to read, and failing in that, she took up her sewing—she always had some handy—and she kept at work till midnight.

She dressed for the street, putting on a warm wrap, for the damp nights of the Tropics are often chilly, and then, after extinguishing the boudoir light—the only one burning in the cottage—she went noiselessly out to the street.

Despite the comforting thought that Blake was near or watching her, her heart fluttered so as she hurried on in the shadows that several times she was forced to stop for breath.

She reached the appointed place; but, to her relief, Featherstone was not there. She looked up and down the street, but there was not a living thing in sight.

After a wait of ten minutes, that seemed like as many tedious hours, Marguerite was startled by a step behind her and the loud breathing of a man in a hurry.

She turned, and by the light of a gas lamp some distance down the street she saw the figure of some one near her, and she recognized the voice of the man she had been waiting for.

“Glad to see you have come,” was the salutation. “Will you take my arm? No? Very well, my lady; you may do better without. Now, keep close to me, or we may get parted in the darkness.”

Although far from strong, Marguerite had the endurance and activity of far more robust women. His pace was quick and he breathed hard, like a man whose lips were set; but she kept close to him, neither speaking a word as they hurried along the unlit alleys.

At length they got beyond the city lights without being disturbed. About a mile up the Nuuanu Valley road Featherstone stopped and uttered a low whistle. It was answered by a whistle near by.

He whispered: "There is a carriage at hand."

They reached it and got in; but the carriage did not move. The hoarse voices of men were heard near by and the clicking of rifles, and one shouted out:

"Hold up there till we examine your load."

CHAPTER XXV.

IN THE DARKEST HOUR.

MARGUERITE heard the hoarse, peremptory challenge coming from the darkness without any feeling of alarm; indeed, it gave her courage, for she regarded it as an assurance that Blake was either near by, or else that the men with the rifles were acting under his orders. This remarkable man, with his quiet, earnest ways, his keen eyes and his power to read the thoughts of people—he had certainly read hers—had impressed her with confidence in his ability to do anything he undertook.

Once outside the guards, who he knew watched the principal roads leading into the city, Featherstone felt that he would be safe, for he had run the gauntlet with ease when there was more need for vigilance than now. But when he found himself halted he was, for the moment, so staggered that he could make no response.

Men who depend for success on cunning need to have ready wits. At heart Featherstone was a coward, but he had the manner that is apt to pass for pluck with the inexperienced.

Coughing, to give an outlet to his nervousness rather than to clear his throat, he called out, peremptorily:

"Hello, there! Who are you?"

"Friends of Hawaii," came the response.

"Then you are friends of mine," said Featherstone, with affected joy.

"What is your name?" from the darkness.

"Captain Paul Featherstone, late of the English Army."

"And the lady who accompanies you?"

"Mrs.—Mrs. Marguerite Holmes, also English by birth."

"And Hawaiian by adoption," joined in the little woman, her voice strikingly musical in contrast with the hoarse tones of the man.

An approving laugh came from the darkness, and the sergeant of the guard asked:

"Have you a pass, Captain Featherstone?"

"I have not; I did not know one was needed. I am a subject of Her Majesty the Queen of England."

"If you were Her Majesty herself you could not go on without a pass."

"May I ask why not?"

"You may ask whatever you please."

"Then I demand to know why I am detained?"

"I am obeying orders."

"From whom?"

"The Provisional Government. Now, sir, let me ask where you are going this early morning with that lady?"

"To the Pali."

"Ah, that is a dangerous place in the daytime; it is a thousand times more so at night," said the sergeant.

"I was going to drive slowly on till daylight. Our purpose is to see the sun rise from the cliffs."

"Yes, that is a rare fine sight; but there is a good road up there and with your team you can make the trip from here in half an hour. I shall consult with the captain in charge of this district, and if he thinks it well to have you go on I shall let you off; but, for the lady's sake, not till I can see daylight on the crest of Lanihuli."

Featherstone choked down an oath, and the sergeant and his men held a whispered consultation, and some of them moved off; but enough remained back to form a post about the carriage, around which they paced with the quiet persistency that distinguishes soldiers on guard. Marguerite, though ordinarily impulsive and nervous, heard all this without a tremor of alarm. She was so well satisfied with the situation that she snuggled down in

her corner with her shawl wrapped about her, and was actually dropping off into a doze when Featherstone bent over and whispered:

"Can you hear me?"

"I can," she responded.

"Do you know what I think?"

"How should I know?"

"I think you have betrayed me!" he hissed.

"How could I?"

"By arranging with these men to be here."

"I did not know you were coming here. You did not tell me. I have followed out your instructions to the letter, and if you have blundered again you should be man enough to place the blame where it belongs," said Marguerite, with a force that surprised him.

Hitherto he had regarded her as a sweet, cunning, weak, lovable little creature whom he had entirely under his control, and who would do his bidding like a trained dog; so that it hurt his inordinate vanity to find that the woman he had been regarding as his tool had set his authority at defiance and treated his assumed mastery with contempt.

He had been playing a bold game for large stakes, and he had shown a foresight and persistency that might have been regarded as able in a more commendable line. But now that he saw the chances for wealth vanishing it was, perhaps, natural that hate should spring from the ruins of his ambition and that he should look to revenge as the one thing that would appease his suffering.

Silence came again, but it brought him no repose. The tramping of the soldiers outside maddened him. The quiet, regular breathing of that amazing little creature in the corner, who must actually have dropped off to sleep, fell upon his ears with all the torture of the filing of a saw.

He turned and twisted and swore under his breath, all the while asking himself what he should do when daylight came and he was released. He could not well return to the city, and to go on to Pedro's would be to commit himself for the abduction of Kohala. He had had no thought of going to the Pali; but he told the

guards that that was his destination, and so there was nothing left him but to keep good his word.

Marguerite was entirely right when she inferred that Blake was the man who held the carriage. She would have known his quick, keen voice had he spoken; but as he did not, she concluded that he was not present; yet he was.

After seeing that the carriage was properly guarded Blake hurried back some distance to where a man was holding a saddled horse by the roadside, and, after exchanging salutations, he mounted and rode back to Honolulu.

He called at headquarters and found Colonel Loring asleep on a sofa in his office. He woke him up and told him what he had done, and, as to what he proposed doing, he said:

"I am going to drive that carriage to the Pali."

"But Featherstone will recognize you," said the colonel.

"No, he won't."

"How can you help it?"

"He has a native driver now; I know the man."

"Well?"

"I shall go to my quarters and make up like that native. Trust me for that—"

"But how can I help?"

"Mount twenty or thirty men as soon as it is daylight and send them in all haste to Pedro's."

"To Pedro's!" exclaimed Loring.

"Pedro Molino, a Portuguese. He lives on the abandoned Markham place, to the left of the Nuuanu Valley."

"I remember. The fellow is a rascal."

"Yes, colonel, one of the grandest rascals in Hawaii, unless it may be Featherstone. If there was a belt given for pure cussedness and unadulterated villainy that fellow would be entitled to one as big in girth as the Equator."

"And the woman, Blake, what do you think of her?"

"She's a daisy, colonel—a perfect gem of a woman."

"What!" laughed Colonel Loring, "has she caught you, too?"

"She didn't try to. By Jinks! like Captain Scott's

coon, I came down and surrendered without firing a shot. Any man hereafter who dares to say a word against that little lady in my presence must be a better man than me or he'll find himself badly licked."

"I shall keep that in mind, Blake; but on general principles I agree with you. Confound the cur, say I, who will slander a defenseless woman! What, are you off? Well, good luck to you, Blake, and depend on me to do as you request."

Colonel Loring rose, gave Blake a hearty handshake and saw him to the door.

When Blake got back to the carriage, which he did in the perfect disguise of a native, the first tints of the coming day were lighting up the stern, rocky head of Kona-huanui, to the east of the Pali cliffs.

Without attracting Featherstone's notice, Blake, after having made himself known to his companions, who, though expecting the change, were amazed at its completeness, succeeded in removing the driver and in taking his place.

"Coming to the carriage door, the sergeant called in:

"Captain Featherstone, I have just received orders from the officer of the post to release you. Day is dawning, and if you hurry up you will be in plenty of time to catch, from the Pali, the sun coming up out of the sea."

Featherstone was in no mood to be grateful for his release; indeed, the soldier's words seemed to have on him a maddening effect, for he put his head out of the door and shouted to the man on the box:

"Drive on! Do you hear me! Drive on!"

"Where; to Pedro's?" came back the question in native accents.

"No, curse you! To the Pali! Don't you hear me?"

"Oh, I hear," was the quiet response.

"Then go."

"All right."

The whip cracked and the sleeping horses shook themselves and started off, a little stiffly at first, but soon they limbered into a smart trot.

Marguerite heard all this, but still pretended to be asleep. As the carriage swayed and turned in the ascent

of the beautiful valley she caught frequent glimpses of the coming day on the crest of the steep volcanic hills to the right and left.

Her appreciation of the beautiful was intense. The glory of that Tropic morning so inspired her during the transformation from inky blackness to golden blaze of the sun on the mountain-tops that she forgot her troubles and her position.

Up through the sweet home-land of fair Koolau, up past the palm-thatched huts of the natives, up through the jungles of lantana covering the volcanic rocks the carriage rolled.

The man on the box, cheered no doubt by the glory of the scene, broke into a native song; but he had not finished the first verse before Featherstone, at some risk to himself, put out his head and shouted:

"Confound you! stop that noise."

"I make no noise; I sing," said the driver, and, to prove it, he went on with greater force, keeping time to the measure by cracking his long whip and stamping with his boots on the dashboard.

Marguerite heard all this, and had it been light enough Featherstone might have seen a roguish gleam in the long-lashed eyes and a smile playing about the sweet little mouth. What was torture to him she saw the ludicrous side of and heartily enjoyed.

They were within a few hundred yards of their destination, the Pali Cliff, over which King Kamehameha drove the last of his opponents into the sea, when Featherstone called to the driver to stop, which was promptly done.

"We must get out here, madam, and walk on," said Featherstone.

He sprang out, and extended his hands to help her; but she ignored his proffer of assistance and descended as lightly as if she were not stiff in every limb.

"Drive down the hill for a mile or so," said Featherstone to the man, who had descended from the box.

"Wait long, sa?" asked the man.

"I don't know. Do as you are told." Then, in the

same harsh voice, Featherstone turned to Marguerite and asked: "Can you make out without help?"

"I shall try to," she said, and as she could now see the road leading up to the top of the Pali, she sprang ahead.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED.

ALTHOUGH gentle and unsuspecting in his nature, and more ready to believe in the good in men than to suspect the wrong, Kohala, after that midnight meeting with Featherstone, saw into and through the fellow's character more clearly than if the wretch had made a confession in the presence of death.

He not only saw why Featherstone had clung to him abroad and followed him to Hawaii, but he inferred, with amazing accuracy, the part which the man had planned for Marguerite to act in the furtherance of his own schemes.

When he first heard Colonel Ellis's story—a story that reflected on Marguerite's honesty and fealty—love, jealous in proportion to its strength, maddened him, and he felt doubt of her in his heart, but he had too much pride to confess that doubt to his friend.

But when he recalled that she had given to him the best evidence of her love, that in the few whispered words they had apart after the marriage ceremony she warned him against the very dangers that now environed him, doubt gave way to a faith that filled him and thrilled him with confidence, and with a determination as to his own course of action, from which he had not and would not vary till death wrote "finis" to the close of the story of his own life.

He now saw why he had been brought here, and, while he was too loyal to the men of his own race to believe that they would scheme for his capture to aid the enterprise of Featherstone, he believed that Pedro and the captain had played upon their patriotism and made them their tools to gain their own ends.

Further, he realized—and the truth came to him like a blow from a giant—that if Featherstone did not clearly see the way to success he would not hesitate to put that witness out of the way in order to save himself and to silence the one witness whose evidence would crush him.

All this flashed through Kohala's mind as he stood by the open window looking out into the impenetrable darkness where he knew that guards were watching to prevent his escape.

A high wind whistled through the plummy tops of the palms and swayed the hissing undergrowth with a sound like the dashing of the sea against the sides of a moving ship.

This noise was favorable to the venture on which he hastily decided. He took off his boots, tied them together with a handkerchief and fastened them about his neck.

The fact that he had no arms intensified his caution. The window opened on a piazza, and it was only a short step from there to the ground. During the day he had seen enough of the outside to give him some idea of direction and of the immediate obstacles he might have to encounter.

As it was so dark that he could not see the fingers of his hand held close to his face, Kohala did not attempt to creep, but, standing erect and moving as silently as a cat approaching its prey, he passed through the window and out to the junglelike garden.

Glancing back, he saw the light in the room where Pedro and his friends were drinking and consulting, and this gave him a guide by which he could direct his course. Before moving again he put on his boots.

Every few seconds he stopped and bent to listen, and till he grew familiar with the sound of the wind away up in the palms it seemed so much like the hoarse whispering of angered men that he could hear and feel the thumping of his own heart.

As he went on, with many a backward glance, the light in the window grew dimmer and dimmer, till it finally faded out, and then he felt lost amid the tangle of lantana and the walls of prickly cactus that seemed to rise up before him on every hand.

There is nothing so uncertain as the direction from which a sound comes in the dark, unless one is expecting it from a certain quarter. Over the whispering and hissing of the wind Kohala heard the barking of a number of curs. He knew they were near the house, but what direction that was in he could not tell.

While he was halted and listening he was startled at hearing, close by—so close, indeed, that it seemed he could smell the smoke-tainted breath of the speakers—two men in conversation. The first words that came to Kohala's ears were:

"Those fellows in there"—no doubt meaning Pedro and his friends—"are playing for big stakes; they'll make a fortune out of this, while we must be content with two dollars a day, ten cheroots and a pint of whisky."

"Well, don't kick, Sanchez; that is more than we were making before we took the job. My only fear is that it won't last long. Ah, if I had a good long head on me our positions would be changed, and Pedro would be guarding and I'd be planning to reap the harvest of gold. But I have an idea, friend Sanchez."

"You have?"

"Yes."

"Doesn't it astonish you, Tom?"

"I don't know. Why do you ask?"

"Well, an idea with you is so odd. But let us hear it before it goes."

"It is this, Sanchez—now you've got some sense."

"Is that the idea?"

"No, for you might have twice as much without being in danger of brain fever. But you know that everything's upside down in Hawaii at this time?"

"Everything but the Americans, Tom; they're up, and it strikes me they're going to stay up."

"Maybe; but you'll agree that they'd like to find the man we are guarding for two dollars a day, not to mention the cheroots and whisky."

"Yes, Tom, there is no doubt about that."

"And don't you think Colonel Loring would pay big to find him?"

"I am sure of it."

"Then, Sanchez, you can see my idea."

"Yes, but it's a bit foggy."

"Then I'll make it clearer."

"I wish you would."

"Let us carry off Kohala before daybreak."

"Where to?"

"Away from here to a point where one of us can guard him while the other one goes into Honolulu and sells his information and agrees to lead the soldiers to the man they want. There is a lot of money in that, and then it would save us from the trouble that is bound to come when Featherstone is hunted down, as he is sure to be. What do you think of the scheme, Sanchez?"

"Think, Tom? Why, I think you're what they call a genius, and I am in with you. Let us get closer to the house; it will soon be daylight and there is no time to lose."

The two men passed so close to Kohala that the arm of one actually brushed against him, and it was not till they had gone some distance, in what he now believed to be the direction from which the barking came, that he ventured to move on again.

"If they go back to examine my room," reasoned Kohala, "they will soon discover my absence, and then, as they cannot carry out their plan, they will try to get credit for discovering my flight and will give the alarm."

He pushed on with more speed, and had just reached an open space that he thought must be a road or a cleared field when he heard a series of appalling yells behind him, accompanied by the increased barking of the dogs and the discharge of firearms.

This startled him, but it did not lessen his presence of mind.

He knew that the uproar was intended to intimidate him if he were within hearing. This supposition was soon verified.

Above the clamor he heard Pedro's voice calling out:

"We see you! Come, there's no use trying to fool us! We don't want to harm you, but if you don't come back we'll kill you! Do you hear?"

If Pedro expected a reply to this, he was disappointed.

Again the shouting burst out; the flash of a lantern could be seen in the direction of the men, and the crashing noise of their tearing through the jungle drowned out the wind in the palms.

The lantern, without which Pedro could have made no headway, promised to be Kohala's salvation, for while it could not light up a path to liberty for himself, like the lighthouse beacon to the storm-tossed mariner, it indicated the place that was to be avoided.

The fugitive could only hold himself back by a strong effort of will. The impulse, as is ever the case, was to fly with all speed from the pursuing danger; but to have done this blindly would have been to exhaust himself before the time for the supreme effort came; and deliberately to control himself by such reasoning under such circumstances indicated a self-command of no ordinary order.

The open space reached by Kohala proved to be a road, and not a very good one at that; but whither it led he did not ask himself so long as it led him away from the men who were determined to recapture him, dead or alive.

As he ran on, reeling now and then into the lantana jungle on either hand, he stumbled over something and fell. In rising, his hand came into contact with a piece of wood that felt like a wagon-spoke, and without any reason at the moment he clung to it.

After this he had not proceeded more than a hundred yards when he heard the baying of a bloodhound—he had heard the deep, bell-like cry before and knew what it meant.

The animal seemed to be at his heels, and as he stopped to listen he caught the pounding of hoofs, showing that at least one of his pursuers was mounted, and he saw the swaying of the lantern.

Again Kohala's presence of mind—and he needed it at this juncture—did him good service. Under such circumstances the thoughts move with the rapidity of lightning and the reasoning, having in it the element of instinctive self-preservation, is usually right. If he ran till the dog came up his powers of resistance and defense would be lessened. He realized this and forced himself

down to a quick walk, while momentarily the baying of the hound came nearer and nearer.

Now the value of his find reconciled him to his fall, and he came to regard it as Providential. As the hound seemed to be right at his heels he halted and grasped his club with a feeling of intense satisfaction.

He could not see, but the baying suddenly stopped, and he felt the dirt thrown on his feet as the creature came to a halt.

Setting his teeth and striking with all his might, in the darkness, to be sure, yet with the almost certain feeling that he was going to hit something, Kohala brought down the club.

He felt it crashing into a pliant body. He heard a gurgling groan, and he reasoned that for the present, at least, there was no danger in that particular dog.

He had not long to wait, for the rider with the swinging lantern was coming on at a gallop and at this time was not more than fifty yards away.

Now the fugitive put forth all his speed and shot ahead, all the quicker for the slope of the ground which fell away in the advance.

He did not see Pedro's horse suddenly stopping and nearly unseating his rider as he came upon the huge dog dying in the road; but he did hear the crack of a rifle and the whizz of a bullet and the torrent of fierce imprecations which the now maddened and alarmed horseman sent after him.

Kohala must have run fully a mile before he came to a halt. Then the sounds behind had died out and the wind had sunk to rest, or else there were no palms to be whispered to.

As he stood trying to peer through the darkness he saw before him, and seemingly high up in the heavens, an opal glow on the rugged mountain crests above the Pali.

He waited for some minutes, the hope in his heart increasing as the light of another day came creeping down the mountains, driving the darkness and the mists before it.

Soon he began to recognize the hills; and not Tell,

when he escaped from an Austrian dungeon and found himself a free man amid the surrounding peaks and crags of his native Alps, felt the thrill that came to the heart of the young Hawaiian and sent the blood coursing joyously through his veins as he recognized the landmarks and mountain monuments above the historic cliffs of the Pali.

Lower and lower down the slopes came the light, revealing the outlines of the palms and bringing to view the nestlike huts of the natives.

Kohala hurried on, but still kept an eager lookout in every direction. At length he reached the Pali road, not twenty minutes' walk from the precipice.

While seated on a rock, resting and thinking, he heard, not far away, a native love-song, accompanied by the tramping of horses, the rolling of wheels and the crackling of a whip.

He recalled that it was not unusual for lovers of the sublime and beautiful—who were principally tourists—to come out to the Pali before day in order to see the great red disk of the sun lifting out of the eastern ocean and turning the turquoise waters to liquid flame. But who in troubled Honolulu at this time could give thought to the romantic?

The panting horses came laboring up, and when the dim outline of a covered carriage came to view a hundred yards below, Kohala drew back into the lantana jungle and waited.

The carriage stopped before it got abreast of where he was and he heard voices; one was unmistakably that of Featherstone and the other was a woman's, and though he could not recognize it, it thrilled him and set his heart a-fluttering, for he could not see or think of a woman without having the idol in his heart leap up to his brain in the form of Marguerite.

He heard the carriage turning below, then the fall of feet and the sound of voices came nearer.

He parted the jungle and looked out; and his heart stopped beating for the moment as he saw his wife walking up to the cliff—walking up, clearly of her own voli-

tion, to the Pali, beside the man whom he knew to be an adventurer and a traitor.

Forgetting for the time where and what he was, the fires of jealousy blazed up in the young man's breast and he recalled what Colonel Ellis had told him in Hawaii.

That Featherstone should betray him was shocking, but he had never considered it among the impossibilities; but that the woman he had so worshiped should demonstrate her perfidy before his eyes was something so terrible that, as he realized it, he was stunned almost into insensibility.

They passed on, and then the reaction set in. The hot blood flamed from the young man's heart to his eyes till he looked like one of his own savage ancestors on the warpath. Choking down a cry of hate and rage he clutched his club, and, with the stealthy step of a tiger, followed his wife and Featherstone up to the Pali precipice.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON THE PALI CLIFFS.

It was a morning such as is never seen out of Hawaii, and not often there.

The valleys stretching away to Honolulu were veiled in a silvery mist, above which the fronded palms showed their heads like ships becalmed at sea.

A cloud in the upper sky looked to be changing from a warm opal to an intense golden flame, and it needed no stretch of the imagination to make it the scone of the soft, warm illumination falling like a holy halo on the emerald land.

The mountains looked like masses of amethyst, tipped on their higher crests—which had already caught the sun—with giant points of amber and ruby that seemed to be self-luminous.

The air was still asleep, and through it floated birds and butterflies, the flash of their wings suggesting the opening and closing of animated blossoms.

If she knew that she were walking to death—and she was far from feeling that such was not now the case—Marguerite, with her keen sensibilities and poetic soul, could not have remained indifferent to the indescribable beauty and undreamed-of sublimity of her surroundings.

As she went on she could hear the fall of the breakers coming up, as it seemed to her, from the foundations of the volcanic hills like the measured beat—the rhythmic throbbing of the island's heart.

“If Kohala were only here, then death in such a place and at such a time could have no horrors.” This she thought, as she, with daintier, airier step, went ahead of her panting, purple-faced companion.

Marguerite had been to the Pali before and with this same man, but it did not look like the same place. A glorious landscape, like an expressive face, has its moods and phases and its varying lights that give it a changing and ever-increasing beauty. Such a face and such a scene never pall, never weary the beholder with the oppression of soulless monotony.

At length she reached the crest of the cliff and drew back with a suppressed cry of alarm, for there yawned at her feet the awful precipice of the Pali, with the white breakers gleaming a thousand feet below like the flash of a cruel monster's teeth.

“Are you frightened?” asked Featherstone, with a mocking laugh, as he sat down on a red rock that looked as if it had been stained by the blood of the great kings slain.

“No,” she managed to say, but she did not look at him. She stepped back with her gloved hand pressed to her eyes, as if to shut out the appalling abyss at her feet.

Strange that we can look up into the profound depths of space with no feeling of horror and that from the land we can look out on the destroying, all-devouring sea with no feeling of dread, while the nerves are unstrung by a glance from an upper window.

With the precipice out of sight, Marguerite ventured to look out and beyond. The east was all aflame, and the crescent of the rising sun, blood-red and burning, was rising over the far-off rim of the heaving ocean.

The circle of the barrier reef was visible, rolling like pearl mountains in whose liquid arms a thousand tangled rainbows had been caught and intermingled.

So entranced was Marguerite with the transcendent glory of the scene spread out before her that she forgot everything but Kohala. His presence was the one thing needed to fill to overflow the chalice of her elevated and soulful rapture.

From the splendor of this waking dream she was aroused by the voice of Featherstone breaking in like a torturing discord on the entrancing flow of an exquisite harmony, and saying:

"You seem to enjoy it."

He rose from the rock, pushed his handkerchief into his pocket, as if he were provoked at it, and came and stood near her.

Before replying Marguerite turned and stepped back, with an instinctive desire to be out of his reach, and it may be, for the purpose of watching his face, in which she saw nothing reassuring.

"I have been enjoying it," she said.

"And I have spoiled the pleasure; is that it?"

He stooped and tried to look into her eyes; but without showing her dread—a dread increased by the proximity of that awful cliff—she avoided his gaze, and responded:

"You have brought me here, Captain Featherstone, now tell me your purpose."

"Oh, I shall do that. But first, let me ask: Did you not think I was going to take you to Kohala?"

"I did; but I now see the folly and weakness of my credulity, for you evidently had no such purpose in mind."

"Yet, madam, I assure you I had."

"Then why did you not carry it out?"

"Do you not know?"

"I do not."

"Then let me say I have been crediting you with more shrewdness than you seem to possess."

"I shall not ask why you have come to that conclusion."

"If you did I should tell you that you should have seen

that those dogs of guards—curse them! I wish I could see every man of them tumbling over the Pali—interfered with my plans. I could not go to Kohala without letting them know his whereabouts. Do you understand that?" he sneered.

"I understand what you say."

"And I say what I mean."

"Then I must infer that you and your associate conspirators hold Kohala prisoner at some point not far from where we are?"

"I have not said that; but I will say that the man you call your husband is in danger of death—"

"Of death!" she cried.

"Ay, of death; and it will come swift and inexorable before another sun rises if you do not interfere to save him."

"If I do not interfere to save him?" she repeated.

"Why, man, I am ready to die to save Kohala not only from death, but from suffering! For God's sake, take me to him at once!" and she clasped her hands and reached them out appealingly to him.

"Have a little patience—"

"But you torture me! Is it manly to do this?"

"Torture you! Torture you! Look at me, woman!"

He drew himself up and smote his breast in a way that would have been mock heroic under any other circumstances, but which seemed tragic there. "Do you give thought to the torture you have brought to me?"

"If I have given you pain, pardon, for Heaven knows I never meant it; and it is the spirit of justice to measure the act by the motive that inspires it."

"Once your pleading would have been all-potent with me, for I loved you, and, loving you, I trusted you and believed in you as I never believed in a human being before. But you have betrayed me and shattered all the plans I had made for your happiness." He paused, bit his lip as if debating a second thought, and added: "But if you choose to do right, choose what you led me to believe you would do, it is not too late."

"I may have seemed to lend myself to your schemes," she said, a becoming flush rising to her usually pale

cheeks and a brave light coming into the long-lashed gray eyes, "yet it was that I might the better understand you. I have never laid claims to a masculine intellect, yet I would have been an irresponsible and unreasoning idiot if I had closed my eyes to your purpose when you coaxed me to pretend love for Kohala after you had already asked me to be your wife."

"And you agreed to be my wife!" he interrupted.

"So I did. At that time I was poor and alone in the world, and although I knew that I did not and could not love you, yet I believed you to be a soldier and a gentleman whom I could, at least, respect. But I was not long in learning your true character, nor long in discovering that I could return Kohala's love. Then, for his sake, I acted my part; but from first to last I defy you or any one to say that I have done aught that any true woman would not have done under the same circumstances."

"Yes, you thought by throwing me over and marrying this gilded savage that you might become the queen consort of the King of Hawaii. Oh, I understand you," said Featherstone, with a mocking laugh.

"If I had had any such ambition then I must have doubted all your statements and among them your professions of love—the latter I never believed in, for I saw you wanted to use me simply as a tool for the furtherance of your mercenary designs. You told me that if Kohala married a white woman the natives would not only refuse to make him their king, but that they might seek his life. He did not want to be king; but he did love me and I loved him, and the world is wide enough for our love to live in beyond the shores of Hawaii," and she waved her hand to the east, from which came over the flashing waters the rising sea breeze.

Featherstone surveyed the slender figure with a look of unutterable hate in his bloodshot eyes. His fingers closed and opened with a murderous expression, and an onlooker would have said that it was to keep from seizing her at once and hurling her over the cliffs that he turned and walked down the slope for twenty yards, then came slowly back.

"Yes," he said, as he came and stood before her again,

"you have played a strong hand and won the odd trick. But it will do you no good. Your husband is a prisoner, and only death can release him—and you are here with me alone and helpless. Do you understand that, my lady?"

"I understand; yet I cannot think you so wholly a coward," she managed to say, "as to offer harm to a helpless woman."

"Coward! Fudge! I am not trying to establish in your eyes a reputation for gallantry."

He reached out his hand as if to seize her wrist, but she drew back with a startled cry.

Featherstone would have followed up this advance, but at that instant his quick ear caught the sound of a moving stone among the mass of rocks to the right.

He stopped and looked eagerly about him. The sun was now pouring a flood of gold into the Nuuanu Valley, and the silvery mists were rising and dissolving over the steeples of distant Honolulu.

What was that? Up from the valley, clear, resonant and startling, there came the thrilling notes of a military bugle, sounding the advance.

Featherstone looked eagerly down in the direction of the sound and caught the flash of the sun on polished arms. The soldiers were approaching, and his heart told him they were searching for him.

Driven to desperation by the thought that the end was nearing and that all his plans had melted into thin air, like the mists, he shot out an oath, and, springing back, caught the slender figure in his arms, and shouted:

"If we cannot live, we can at least die, together."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

It is said by those who have been suddenly confronted by what seemed death in its most terrible form that there is no sense of dread. Dread implies time for thought, a

period during which the cause can be carried by a mental process to its effect; but in the face of immediate destruction, even though resistance be made, there is no sense of horror, for all the reasoning faculties are paralyzed.

Marguerite sent up a cry when she saw Featherstone leaping toward her with the look of a madman in his eyes; but entirely powerless to move, she stood as if rooted to the spot.

She did not faint; but as he pressed her in his arms, still carrying her toward the Pali Cliff, he kissed her, and with her weak arms she fought him off as best she could, but he was entirely unconscious of the resistance she offered.

Curiously enough she noticed a crimson butterfly that at that moment flitted past her face; and she mentally appreciated its exquisite beauty, and recalled that, to the old Greeks, it typified Psyche, or the immortal soul.

She caught sight of the awful abyss, and the name in her heart burst up to her lips.

"Kohala! Kohala!"

"Ay, call upon Kohala; he is powerless to help you now!" shouted Featherstone, and he stooped to kiss her again.

Clear, high and ringing, like a heaven-sent answer to the cry of Marguerite, she heard the loved voice answering:

"Kohala is here!"

With the swift sweep of an eagle, which with fierce cry rushes down on the despoiler of its eyrie, Kohala of Hawaii, from the rock behind which he had been concealed, leaped straight at the throat of the traitor.

With his left hand fastened in the wretch's neck, in the right he swung the club that had already freed him from a nobler dog, and Featherstone staggered back, his hat severed by the blow and the blood flowing over his face.

He released his hold of Marguerite as he fell back, and in her amazement and utter helplessness she would have dropped to the ground had not other and more manly arms caught and sustained her.

"Marguerite! My life! my wife!" She heard the

dear voice of Kohala and felt his kisses raining on her face, then the heavens and the earth were blended and she knew no more.

"My Marguerite! my wife is dead!" cried Kohala, in tones of mingled rage and anguish.

He carried her back from the cliff, and, laying her down with her back against a protecting rock, supported the dear head with one hand and by means of his hat in the other he tried to fan her.

She had lost consciousness in that moment of supreme emotion and deadly peril; but, like a true defender of the loved, all his senses and powers were intensified.

From the instant he had freed his wife from Featherstone's clutch Kohala, in his anxiety for her safety, gave the fellow no thought, till the clicking of a pistol hammer recalled him to a sense of the true situation.

Springing to his feet and looking quickly about him, he saw Featherstone resting on one knee and covering him with a revolver.

Then came a flash and a crash. Kohala instinctively had leaped to one side and the bullet hit the rock above Marguerite's head, and the leaden splash struck one cheek and restored her to consciousness.

Featherstone was an adept with the pistol, but his hand was not steady and the blood from his wound had dimmed his sight.

He rose to his feet, with an oath at his failure, and was in the act of recocking the pistol when Kohala—not thinking of the club which had been cast aside—sprang at him, and, seizing the pistol, tried to wrench it from his grasp.

Featherstone, though not so tall as Kohala, was far more powerfully built, and, in his time, had prided himself on his athletic skill. In addition to this he had the Englishman's contempt for the strength and endurance of an opponent, particularly an opponent of another race.

He could not hold to the pistol and use all his great strength to advantage, so he threw the weapon to the front, and, as it went crashing against the jagged spikes of the Pali Cliff, the cartridges in the chamber were exploded.

"Curse you! now I have you!" roared Featherstone.

He threw his powerful arms about the younger man, and so sudden and unexpected was the act that, before Kohala could brace himself to resist, he was drawn at least ten feet toward the abyss, which was now only a few yards away.

Hate is strong, but love is stronger. Hate is for the hour, but love is for eternity.

Kohala caught sight of the frightened eyes and white face of his wife, and her helplessness filled him and nerved him with the strength of a giant.

The one man was ponderous wrought-iron, the other was well-tempered and elastic steel. The one man was fighting for death, the other for life.

Featherstone felt two arms clasping his waist, while the fingers, like the claws of a tiger, seemed to cut through his flesh, and then he was lifted high above the head of the younger man and flung back with a force that must have crushed the life out of him on the rocks had he not, with the instinct of a trained wrestler, clung to the collar of his opponent, which, though it gave way, broke the force of his fall.

Again Kohala's splendid presence of mind came into play. He realized that he was standing between Featherstone and the brink of the Pali, and that he might be sent over the cliff by the sudden onset of his panting assailant. Quicker than it takes to record the act he had leaped beyond his foe and repossessed himself of his club, no small advantage in such a struggle.

Featherstone saw all this as he sprang to his feet. He was about to make another rush at Kohala, who, anticipating it, stood on his guard, when another figure, that seemed to have dropped from the sky, so sudden was its appearance, leaped between the two.

In this figure Featherstone recognized the driver whom he supposed to be with the horses down the hill, if, indeed, he had given him a thought since parting from him.

"What brings you here? Back to your horses!" he shouted, and he was amazed that the native did not fly at his bidding.

"The horses are all right, captain."

This is what the native said, in the calm, impassive voice of a white man who was quite at home in such a scene and entirely able to take care of himself.

"Get away, you dog, or I will throw you over the cliff!" roared Featherstone, taking a step toward the intruder.

Instead of leaping back the driver drew a pistol from his blouse, pointed it in a businesslike way at the captain's head and said, in the same cool, maddening way:

"I wouldn't try that if I were you, Featherstone; you might get badly left on the contract. Ah, I see you think I am an ordinary Honolulu Kanaka driver. Well, I am not ashamed of your mistake, for some of them are good fellows, right up and down good fellows that you are not worthy to hold a candle to. There, you can now get some idea as to who I am, though I can't get the color off my face without water."

While saying this the driver divested himself of his blouse, loose cotton trousers and wig and stood before Featherstone in the uniform of the Provisional Army.

"Blake!" gasped the captain.

"That is my name, at your service."

"I am sold on all sides!"

"No, not sold; you have given yourself away; that's cheaper," and Blake laughed like a man enjoying the situation. Then, with a half-glance at Kohala, he added:

"You attend to the lady; I'll take care of this fellow."

Kohala sprang to Marguerite's side, knelt down and took the dear head on his breast.

"And what are you going to do with me?" asked Featherstone, with a defiant air and a backward step.

"What do you think should be done with you, come, now?"

"I know what you will not do."

"What is that?"

"Make me a prisoner."

"Oh, yes, I will; and let me say, Featherstone, that I will treat you kinder than you have treated your prisoners, and we'll give you a fair trial and a fitting sentence,

though there are men over in Honolulu at this time who would lynch you off-hand, but Colonel Loring will not permit that. Come, now, old fellow, save trouble by surrendering, for you have reached the end of your halter," and Blake took a forward step.

Featherstone took another backward step, and, with an oath, shouted:

"I will never surrender!"

"Nonsense!"

"Keep back, I tell you!"

"Hold, man! Hold!" cried Blake. "Can't you see the Pali is behind you? Come back!" and, for the first time, he became excited at the awful danger threatening the man in front.

At this juncture the blast of a bugle again rang up the valley accompanied by the cheering of men and the ringing of flying hoofs.

"I will not be taken, I tell you!"

"My God! Hold, man!"

Blake sprang forward as if to seize Featherstone, but he was too late.

Featherstone reeled on the edge of the chasm, gave a quick downward glance, tried to recover himself, then, with a cry that froze the listeners with horror, plunged over the precipice of the Pali.

"Come, Kohala, the Pali has lost its glory and its beauty for to-day," said Blake, and, shading his eyes, he tottered back from the chasm down which an unfortunate life had vanished.

"Devil though the man was," said Kohala, with a shudder, "I would have saved him from that if I could."

"He brought it on himself. Sooner or later it had to come. After all, what matters it whether such lives go out on the gallows or over the Pali? Can I help you, madam?"

"No, I thank you," said Marguerite, who now stood trembling and clinging to her husband's arm.

"Then let us be moving."

As they went down toward the carriage Marguerite slowly recovered from the awful shock, though it was long before she was fully restored. It seemed to her as

if she had been and still was in a dream, and it was to satisfy herself that such was not the case that she said to Blake.

"Oh, sir, you have been so kind, and I have to thank you for so much."

"If I have been of use it was simply in the line of my duty; but I will say, madam, that I so admired your pluck and your genuine, no-mistake, fast-color love for your husband that I'd have looked on it as a pleasure to help you whether it was duty or not."

"Then I must thank you, too," joined in Kohala.

"Oh, that all goes for granted. But you must tell me your story as soon as we get a good chance. Featherstone was not in this job alone, and in the interest of justice we must get at the fellows who helped him. By the way, madam, were you alarmed when the carriage was stopped last night?"

"On the contrary, Mr. Blake," said Marguerite, "that incident brought me a great sense of comfort."

"Indeed!" with a pleased laugh. "How was that?"

"I knew that you had caused it."

"Good; so I did."

"But I never dreamed that you were the driver."

"No? Well, I thought I should surprise you before we got through. Hello! here's my team. And now, Kohala, if you and your wife will get in it will afford me the greatest pleasure of my life to drive you both back to Honolulu."

As Blake was holding open the door and Marguerite and Kohala were getting in a band of armed horsemen came on the scene, and when they learned what had happened they waved their hats, stood up in the stirrups and cheered to the echo.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A NEW DANGER.

BEFORE the carriage started off the officer in command of the mounted men said to Blake:

"You are right about that fellow Pedro."

"Did he confess?" asked Blake.

"No; but two of his men did."

"What have you done with them?"

"Sent the whole lot, except the girl, Annetta, prisoners into Honolulu."

"Good; now let us be getting back."

The horsemen fell in behind the carriage, and the hungry team never went down the valley road at such a pace before.

Residents in the Tropics are not early risers. The cool nights tempt to late hours, and so the people in Honolulu were not yet astir when the carriage halted before Marguerite's cottage.

As Kohala helped his wife out he said to Blake:

"I feel that it is an imposition to trouble you further, but I have a request to ask."

"And I am just in the humor to grant it," said Blake.

"When you have rested and had breakfast would you please call on Colonel Ellis, tell him all that has happened and say that I shall be here whenever he is ready to see me?"

"I shall be delighted. Congratulations on our success. Madam, good-morning."

Blake raised his hat, cracked the whip and was gone.

The couple were sitting in the boudoir about an hour after breakfast, Kohala eagerly awaiting the result of the mission intrusted to Blake, when they heard the roll of a rapidly driven carriage, which came to a sudden stop before the gate.

Unmindful of her warning or anxious to conciliate the new authority, Clem put in her head and said:

"If you please, mem and sir, there's a lady and a gent as wishes to see you."

"What are the names?" asked Kohala.

"Colonel Ellis, sir, and his daughter."

Kissing Marguerite again—that was the one act he could never weary of—Kohala went to the door.

He expected that his old guardian would be cold and provoked; great, then, was his joy when Alice kissed him as if he were her brother—indeed, she so regarded him—and the colonel took him in his arms and fairly hugged him.

"Well," cried Colonel Ellis, when he could get his breath, "it strikes me that you have been getting up a revolution on your own account. But where is the lady? Your wife must be our friend. I tried—foolishly, I now see—to direct the current of your wooing; I should have known that love is the one irresistible, uncontrollable force in Nature."

Alice looked at her father to see if she had his consent to speak, and on receiving a meaning nod, she addressed herself to the young husband and wife in this way:

"The Queen, who thought she was bringing about your marriage to further her own ends, has not been successful. Through her friends the news of this marriage is now flying over all the islands, and, as we may well believe, it will stir up a storm in Hawaii. We have discussed all this at home; and mother, who is still an invalid—particularly in the forenoon—has sent me here as her representative. Here are some of mother's orders," continued Alice, and she looked down at the palm of her shapely right hand as if the orders were written thereon and were plainly legible to herself. "We have a large house and plenty of servants. That house is the home of Kohala. There a welcome always awaits him. Kohala has 'gone and got married'—I don't know where I first heard that colloquialism, but it suits. He loves his wife, and we shall love her for his sake and for her own. This is her home. Tell her to close up at once—we'll send reliable people to pack up her belongings, and so you fetch her with you to this house. These, my dear Marguerite, are mother's orders; do you dare disobey them?"

For reply, Marguerite came over and knelt beside Alice. The two men, without waiting for further consent, walked out, and, in order not to attract attention on the now busy streets, they got into the carriage and were driven round to the Hawaiian Hotel.

They found Phipps on guard at the door of the Council chamber. The only person in the Council-room at this early hour was Colonel Loring. So eager was the young soldier to do his full duty and that nothing should fail by his default that, when not engaged with his command

outside, he was always to be found at headquarters. Indeed, as we have seen, he slept there.

"As there is no time to waste," said Colonel Ellis, when they were seated, "for the steamer for San Francisco sails to-morrow and the danger is hourly growing greater, I think it better that we should look the new danger in the face like men and see how it can be avoided or met."

"What danger do you refer to?" asked Kohala.

"Keona, ever since the birth of his daughter, has lived but for one object, and that was that he should one day see her the wife of the King of Hawaii. His hopes in that direction are blasted, and you should know the consequences—should have reasoned them out before you gave way to the promptings of your heart, though, mark you, Kohala, I am not blaming you. I think I should have acted, under the circumstances, about as you have," said the colonel.

"But what do you mean by the consequences?" asked Kohala.

"You should know without any asking. The natives believe that you, by this marriage, have betrayed them; and I tell you frankly that I fear for the consequences."

A knock at the door brought the conversation to a stop.

The door was opened by Phipps, and Blake entered, looking as fresh as if he had not been up and hard at work all night.

"What news, Blake?" asked Colonel Loring.

"The chief has just arrived, a score of armed men with him."

"Where are they now?"

"Still on board the steamer. But I should not be surprised if Keona appeared at any moment," said Blake.

"You must take my carriage and go with Kohala to the cottage, where you will find his wife and my daughter. Take the whole party round to my house at once," said Colonel Ellis.

Blake saluted, and, now keenly alive to the situation, Kohala followed him from the room.

CHAPTER XXX.

ALL FOR LOVE AND A KINGDOM WELL LOST.

BLAKE had come not a moment too soon with the news of the chief's arrival, and Kohala had left the Council chamber not a moment too soon for his own safety.

The two had not been gone four minutes when Phipps looked in and said:

"There's a man here who doesn't belong to the Council, and divil a wan of him knows the pass."

"And his name?" said Colonel Loring.

Before Phipps could put the question to the man outside a high-keyed voice called out:

"I am Keona of Hawaii!"

"Admit the gentleman," said Colonel Loring.

The door was opened and the chief, dressed like a white man, but with a repeating rifle in his hand, strode into the room.

"Glad to see you! When did you arrive?" was Colonel Ellis's salutation, as, with hand extended, he advanced to the chief.

"I have been betrayed!"

"Betrayed?" echoed the colonel.

"Yes, and you, Colonel Ellis, know it!"

"I, Colonel Ellis, know nothing of the kind; and let me say, right here, that I do not permit myself to be talked to in this way," said the colonel, hotly.

"I am Keona of Hawaii."

"I do not care, sir, if you are the King of Hawaii. I have ever been your friend, and I have done nothing to forfeit your regard or to merit this rudeness."

"Colonel Ellis, you are a man?"

"I hope so."

"And you have a daughter?"

"I have."

"What would you do to the man who betrayed her; to the man who was to have married her and then, like a dog, married another, and she a white woman?"

"The word 'betray' is the wrong word to use."

"It may be, for your speech is not mine."

"But you refer to Kohala?"

"I do."

"But would you want him to marry your daughter if he did not love her?"

"Love her?" repeated Keona, not at all understanding the proper meaning of the word. "Is not my Leila, with her youth and beauty and wealth—my Leila, who, since her infancy, has been betrothed to Kohala—more fit to be his wife than is this unknown white woman?"

"She may be, but that does not enter into the question."

"Why not?"

"Kohala is married."

"So I have heard, and may the curse of all the gods fall on him! But he lives, and he is still in Hawaii."

"He lives," said the colonel, sternly, "and he is still in Honolulu; and he and his wife are guests in my house. You know that I was eager for Kohala to marry your daughter; but when he chose to marry another woman, and one who, in my opinion, is the equal of your daughter or mine, then I propose to stand by him. And let me say right here to your face, Keona of Hawaii, that if you attempt to harm this young man or his wife I shall forget our friendship and your wealth and your rank and I will see that you are treated like a common criminal."

"I shall do as my heart prompts," said Keona, with scorn; "and let me say to you that, though my race has melted away before yours, it has been through your vices and not on the battlefield. I do not fear the white man, and Kohala, the renegade, is white down deep to his heart!"

When the door had closed behind the chief Colonel Ellis turned to the young soldier and said:

"That man is desperate, Loring, and must be watched."

"I agree with you," said Loring.

"Can't you detail a number of men to keep a lookout on him?"

"I can, and I shall do it at once. Go to the house, and if you do not need Blake tell him to report here immediately," and Colonel Loring rang the bell for his orderly.

Colonel Ellis, feeling anything but like a man who was

going, that day, to give a wedding dinner at his own house, hastened home.

He found Kohala there with his wife, and they were as happy as if the last cloud had forever vanished from their lives.

The colonel saw this, and realizing that no good could come from telling them of the presence and the threats of the chief he refrained.

After dinner he took Kohala to the smoking-room and said:

"Tell your wife that you must both have your trunks ready for the steamer that sails to-morrow for San Francisco."

"But why this haste?" asked Kohala.

"You must ask no questions, but do as I say."

"Very well; but if I am to leave so soon I must go out and make arrangements with the bank about money."

"You must not be seen on the streets; I will attend to the money. I hold a balance of yours—more than you will need to spend for five years to come—and you can have more when you want it. My advice to you is to go to Europe or to Southern California with your wife. Get a home and keep house; never think of hotel life. After a while peace, prosperity and a better feeling will come to Hawaii, and then it will be quite safe for you to return with your wife. There, my boy, that is all I have to say."

"And from my heart I thank you for what you have said and what you have done," said Kohala, and he seized his guardian's strong, brown hand and kissed it.

It was not till the *Empress of the Seas* had been a day out from Honolulu that any one but Colonel Ellis and his family, Blake and Colonel Loring knew that Kohala and his wife had sailed for America.

Last March Alice Ellis became Mrs. Loring, and the valuable silver service that came on as a wedding present from America was sent by Kohala and his wife. The letter that accompanied it was written by Marguerite, and, among other things, it said:

"We are living in a perfect Eden to the east of Los

Angeles and not far from the Paradise of Pasadena. But with Kohala ever near to assure me of his love, the dullest, stormiest land on earth would be an Eden.

"We never weary of speaking of your great kindness to us, and in that we forget the shadows that fell on us in beautiful Hawaii.

"Life to me, up to this loving, was far from happy, and I regarded it with indifference. Now every moment is a joy, and I fervently thank God that I live and that I may be worthy the continuance of this happiness.

"That you and your noble husband may be as happy as myself and Kohala is the prayer of

"Your affectionate friend, MARGUERITE."

THE END.

Where Is He Going?

Gentle reader, he is hurrying home. And it's house-cleaning time, too—think of that! Fifteen years ago, he wouldn't have done it. Just at this time, he'd be "taking to the woods." But now, things are different. His house is cleaned with **Pearline**. That makes house-cleaning easy. Easy for those who do it—easy for those who have it done. No hard work, no wear and tear, no turmoil and confusion, no time wasted, no tired women, no homeless men. Everything's done smoothly, quickly, quietly, and easily. Try it and see.



A COMMON MAN

BY

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"A Man's a Man for a' that"

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Lovingly
dedicated to
my sisters

L. h. B.

1871

*Ed. Raddick
Buck. N.Y.
1897*

A COMMON MAN.

CHAPTER I.

A PAIR OF OLD SHOES.

THE Fitzhugh family had just finished breakfast and were still seated at the table. The Judge had pushed one side of his chair from the foot of the table and, with his napkin across one knee (an after-breakfast habit of his own), sat in the comfortable enjoyment of two things that can be thoroughly enjoyed only by a man, coffee and a newspaper. The Judge invariably finished his second cup in that manner. He was a fine-looking man of forty-five, with a dark, drooping mustache, and thick, curly hair, lightly sprinkled with gray. He had been a county judge, always dressed in black, and generally wore a high silk hat.

Mrs. Fitzhugh, who graced the head of the

table, and whose fluffy light brown hair rested on the long, tapering fingers of her hand, was discussing the advisability of a ten-mile drive to pay a long-standing country visit, with her son Guy, a handsome boy who had just returned from college to spend his vacation, and who bore becomingly the delightful importance of twenty years and his first mustache. Sitting next to Guy, apparently deeply interested in the momentous subject under discussion, was Genevieve, as fair a picture of grace and beauty as ever a child of six years old presented. She had her mother's soft, fluffy hair, with more tint of gold on her young head, dark brown eyes with long, curling lashes, and pretty, sensitive lips that parted to display her white, even teeth. The dainty little head was so evenly poised upon the slender neck; the lithe figure, the tapering hands, the arched instep of the tiny foot were so deftly fashioned by the generous hand of nature that an artist striving for the portrayal of perfection of grace and beauty on his canvas would have rested content with such a model.

Opposite the brother and sister, her head

lightly bowed over idly folded hands, and her mind as apparently unoccupied, sat Aunt Tildah—Miss Fitzhugh. Rare, indeed, was it in those antebellum days for a Southern girl of beauty and family to have passed the mile-stone of thirty in maidenhood. No other female Fitzhugh in all time had borne that aristocratic name so long. And Aunt Tildah was thirty. You might have taken her for fifty as well; but all the county knew that Tildah Fitzhugh was a lissome lassie entering her teens when her brother Noel had married, twenty years before this story opens. But were the years thirty or fifty, they had laid a heavy hand on the beauty of Tildah Fitzhugh; they had drawn deep lines about the sunken eyes and the close-set lips; they had pointed the chin and hollowed the pale cheeks, and left the round form wasted.

Guy and his mother chatted on about the drive till he won her consent, as he generally did, and they mutually agreed to make an early start. Genevieve, childishly enthusiastic over an outing with her elders, was already pressing the claims of her puppy, Gip, for a seat in the carriage. The Judge had gradually finished his

coffee and had given his assent to the drive, but Aunt Tildah never changed her position and never said a word. When at last the family rose and walked out onto the broad veranda that fronted the house, she followed listlessly, and seated herself a little apart from the others.

"Are you going with us, Tildah?" asked Mrs. Fitzhugh, as Uncle Zekiel appeared to receive orders for the vehicle.

"Are you going?" questioned Miss Fitzhugh, turning her restless eyes on her brother.

"No, I will have to remain in town to-day," he replied, pleasantly.

"Then I will go with you, Martha," said Miss Fitzhugh, and relapsed into her listless state.

"Very well. Zekiel, order the carriage," said the lady of the house.

The gray, woolly head of the old house servant had just disappeared around the corner of the veranda, when the front gate clicked and drew the attention of the family in that direction.

"Whom have we here?" asked the judge, for only visitors in Florissant used the front gate, "darkies" and tradesmen using one that had

been erected at the side of the lawn. "Come here, Don! Down, sir!" he commanded, as the dog bounded toward the intruder.

Ragged, dirty, foot-sore, *he* trudged along over the smooth gravel walk that divided the great, broad lawn in front of the Fitzhugh homestead. Though he looked a very pariah of his kind, and the stick which he bore in his right hand had an ugly knob at its end, he was not a formidable-looking object. Nay, I doubt if among all the fair of Florissant there was one so timid as to have refused him a "lift" in her vehicle, if she had passed him on a country road. Add ten inches to his height and ten years to his age, and not one of the fair young ladies referred to would have passed him without giving a looser rein to her horse and an anxious glance toward the town.

Whatever be their effect on man, even weariness and hunger cannot make a child formidable, and, after all, the tramp was only a child.

He had scarcely reached his fifteenth year, this little wanderer, but the self-reliance that

comes to the mind when forced to depend on self for all was stamped upon his features, drawn though they were with pain, fatigue and hunger; the thick, tawny hair, with a faint tinge of red in its tangled masses, almost hid the boy's broad brow; the prominence of the cheek-bones was accentuated by the hollowness of his cheeks; the nose and mouth were large and the chin square-cut, the teeth strong and regular. The face was not a handsome one—it was probably too old for the few years of its owner, yet there was no cunning in the expression, and the dark gray eyes, the one handsome feature, were attractive by their candor and earnestness. His figure, though thin, was well knit and muscular. His apparel was undeniably shabby, from the crown of the torn straw hat to the very edges of the patched and frayed trousers, held up by a piece of cord passed over one shoulder. The coarse, checked shirt, soiled and torn, was held together over his chest by a sharp black thorn, that served as a rude substitute for a pin. In his left hand he carried a large tin pail filled with blackberries.

"Does yer want any berries?" asked the boy as he reached the foot of the steps.

"No," said the Judge, shortly, for the side gate was one of his hobbies, and the boy had not even touched his hat when he approached.

"When you come again, just use the side gate and go around to the kitchen." The boy's face fell, and the restful look that had come into it when he first placed his foot on the lowest step disappeared as quickly as it had come.

"How much are your berries?" asked Miss Fitzhugh as he turned to go.

"Ten cents," replied the boy.

"Very well, I'll take them," she said, giving her brother a glance similar to one she had vouchsafed before accepting the invitation for the morning drive. "Just carry them around to the kitchen," indicating, with a light wave of her thin hand, the direction recently taken by Uncle Zekiel.

"That boy must be a stranger in Florissant," mused the Judge, not sorry, as he noticed the boy's limp, that his orders had been countermanded, but still mindful of the trespass on his smooth gravel walk.

Younger and softer eyes noticed the limp as well, and light footsteps followed the boy to the kitchen. *She* walked fearlessly up to him, as he stood waiting for Aunt Dinah to empty the pail, and with quick pity in her eyes asked with childish abruptness:

"Have you had any breakfast?"

"No," answered the boy.

"Aren't you hungry?"

"Yes," he answered. And while he stood looking at his fair little questioner she turned and sped from him, just as Aunt Dinah returned the empty pail.

"Oh, mamma, the poor boy hasn't had any breakfast, and he says he is hungry," said Genevieve, running to her mother's side.

"Please let me get him some breakfast, mamma." He heard the coaxing appeal and the parent's assent as he came limping back, and the tanned cheek flushed.

Aunt Tildah had gone to her room for the money to pay for the berries, and Judge Fitzhugh told the boy to sit on the steps and wait. But as Aunt Tildah returned, a lithe little figure brushed past her, and Genevieve,

with face aglow and steady hands bearing a plate piled high with good things from Aunt Dinah's pantry, descended the steps to the boy's side. So intent on her purpose was Genevieve that she did not even glance toward the occupants of the veranda as she passed them.

"Well! well!" exclaimed Judge Fitzhugh.

"Did you ever see such a child!" said his wife, who, in assenting to the recent appeal, had intended to turn the boy over to Aunt Dinah's hospitality in the latter's domain.

"Trixie is a little brick," laughed Guy, approvingly, "Trixie" being the pet name he had given his sister.

But they were not prepared for the actions of the boy. He rose as the child approached him. His temples throbbed, and a lump came in his throat. He turned from her abruptly, toward Miss Fitzhugh, who was standing just above them. "I'm waitin' here fur the ten cents, mum," he said. She handed it to him, and he turned to go, resolutely. As he did so, his eyes rested full on those of the child at L's side. Her sensitive lips were trembling,

and the quick tears of disappointment were ready to flow. "Aren't you hungry? Don't you want any breakfast?" she asked, perplexedly. He hesitated; he was very hungry, but more powerful than hunger was the mute appeal of that quivering lip, of those moist eyes. A fierce conflict was raging under the ragged checked shirt. He could not have defined or understood the emotions of gratitude, deep humiliation and fierce pride that sent the blood surging to his brow. He could have died then and there for that fair-faced child; and the savage in his nature could have dashed the plate that she held to the ground.

"Please eat something. Please do," she urged, coaxingly. Over his mingled emotions flashed the perception of her disappointment. The struggle was ended, and they sat down side by side, with the plate between them.

If Genevieve had harbored a momentary doubt of the boy's hunger, the manner in which he attacked the hastily prepared collation utterly dispelled it. He utterly ignored the knife and fork that she had laid on the plate, but ate with his fingers like the famished

young savage that he was. For the time being, the animal in his nature rose paramount, and all his faculties were engaged in satisfying his hunger. His hostess, with her chin resting in the soft pink hollow of one little hand, sat in silent and happy contemplation of the boy's enjoyment of her feast. She was too young to have tasted often that rare cup of happiness that so seldom loses its nectar for youth or age—the sweet, unselfish happiness of doing good.

At last the boy's hunger was appeased, and his benefactress, whose cultured thoughtfulness had restrained any inclination to question him while he was eating, asked him his name, with all a child's interest in a child.

"John Greystone," he replied.

"Where do you live?"

"Nowhars," he answered; "leastways, not now. I tromped here frum Egypt."

"From Egypt?" wonderingly queried his listener, who had a vague idea of the locality of that far country on her father's atlas.

"Where is Egypt?"

"It's north of here sum'at," said the boy.

"Folks about these parts calls it Illinois, but them as lives thar calls it Egypt."

"Is it very far from here?"

"Powerful fur. I 'low sum'at better'n two hundred miles," he answered.

"Did you walk all the way?" she persisted, deeply interested, and with a child's passion for exhausting an interesting subject.

"Yes, leastways 'ceptin' when I got a lift."

"What kind of a lift?" asked Genevieve, timorously betraying her ignorance.

"Why, lifts on waggins," said the boy.

"Oh!" responded Genevieve. And the conversation ceased abruptly. The young savage wanted to go. He shifted about uneasily, but even the independence of barbarian boyhood could not dissipate the awkwardness of the contemplated leave-taking. He had a wild longing to be out on the road again.

He hated to be questioned. He could not have told why, but he felt instinctively the tacitly appropriated superiority of a questioner, and even the sympathy in the little maiden's soft eyes and in every tone of her silvery voice failed to dispel that hatred. Why must he be

questioned? Why must he tell his name and expose the dreary hardships of his poverty to this tender-voiced child decked out in daintiest lace and muslin? Why! Had she not given him food? Oh, the bitter humiliation of that charity. He half rose to go, but Genevieve, all unconscious of the ill-defined emotions in his breast, had noticed the pain with which he pressed his lame foot to the ground in the first movement of rising, and her quick sympathies were immediately enlisted. "Have you hurt your foot?" she asked.

"Yes, a mule tromped it."

"Don't you want me to get you some nice salve for it?"

"No; I got axle-grease on it. It's better'n it was." And he rose abruptly.

"Do you use that cane because your foot is lame?" she asked, touching the rough, knobbed stick with her dainty fingers.

"Sum'at for that and sum'at for dogs," he answered.

"Why don't you wear shoes?" asked the child of six of the ragged outcast.

"'Cause I ain't got none," he said, desper-

ately, and turned to go. But the fates were against him—the carriage drove up on the instant and momentarily barred his progress. The ladies, who had sent for their bonnets, were already entering the carriage, when Genevieve said: “Wait a minute, mamma; I won’t be more than a minute,” and flitted swiftly into the house.

“Hurry up, Trixie,” called Guy after her as she disappeared. The young gentleman’s patience was not tried, for she reappeared as quickly as she had gone, her young cheeks flushed, her young eyes sparkling, and holding in her hands a pair of shoes. She rushed straight up to the outcast. “They’re Brother Guy’s. He doesn’t want them any more. Please take them,” she said. And the next instant she had bounded into the seat at Guy’s side, and John Greystone stood there alone with the shoes in his hand—stood there dazed, until the carriage was almost out of sight, and he could just discern, through intervening leaves, the far-off waving of a child’s hand.

He looked furtively around, but saw no one, for Judge Fitzhugh had retired into the house.

He laid the shoes down carefully and took several steps toward the road; then stopped, irresolutely. Perhaps some gentle thought of the sorrow of the child if he should thus ignore her gift came to him; for, after another furtive glance at the house, he retraced his steps, folded the shoes under his arm and limped slowly away. What did it matter, after all? He never expected to see her again—he did not want to. Never before in his life had he been brought so near to that class so far above him. In all the rude settlement where he had passed his orphaned days there were no persons of gentle blood, and the brief intercourse with Genevieve had been as a revelation to him. Not to be understood as yet; only to be felt. Her beauty, her generosity, her artless sympathy, her utter ignorance of the merest details that had entered the woof of his hard life and the lives of those he had known were beyond his rude powers of reasoning; but the impression that they made was none the less deep because of its novelty. They were so far above him, these new beings, that he felt oppressed by the vast difference between that slender

child and himself. Yet their pride could not have been greater than his own. He loathed himself for having accepted their charity; and yet he had accepted, unforced, the last humiliating gift. What a concession to the potent spell of those soft brown eyes. He thought of them again and again as he limped along by the hedges, and for all his pride he held the shoes more closely with the thought.

Slowly along the dusty June road he limped, turning at intervals to view the town of Florissant, gradually losing distinctness of outline in the distance, until a rising knoll hid it from his sight. Then leaving the road, where a low murmuring brook lured his footsteps, he was soon deep in the grateful shade of a broad stretch of woodland.

At last he stopped and looked about him. It was a lovely spot. Giant oaks and wide-spreading elms interlaced their leafy arms above him, and wild flowers of varied hue decked the sward on every side. The soft rustle of the leaves, the monotonous twittering of the birds, the droning of insects, the ceaseless murmur of the brook harmonized with the beauty of the

dell—one of those rare solitudes where Nature's lavish hand blends her softest tints, her sweetest sounds, to woo the eye and soothe the ear and solace the heart of man.

At the base of a gigantic oak tree the wanderer noticed a depression in the ground and laid the shoes in it carefully. Then, breaking several leafy twigs from the low-hanging boughs above him, he buried the shoes under their light burden and hid them from his sight forever.

He gazed long and wistfully at the spot, and then, with a lighter heart and a firmer tread, he turned toward the brook, whose winding course he had followed, and casting himself down at its margin, where the sloping banks were shaded by a weeping willow tree, he threw his tattered hat on the ground, and bending over drank deeply of the cooling stream; then laved his bruised foot in it with all a boy's love for running water. Refreshed and soothed, he laid his head upon his arm and gave himself up to the indulgence of the softer mood that had followed the subsidence of the fierce emotions of the morning.

The rustling of the leaves grew fainter in the growing noon; the birds, twittering less shrilly, hopped lazily from twig to twig; the very monotony of the brook's murmur deepened; a great black crow, circling slowly above the dell, settled on the highest branch of the giant oak, and, with one eye cocked curiously at the unfamiliar mound of twigs at its base, perched like a fantastic sentinel over the treasure that they concealed; a poison oak vine threw its shade across the sleeping boy's face, and, shielding, harmed him not; a water moccasin, with eyes like glittering beads and slender fangs that held death in their quivering points, came upon his bare foot in its track, turned and glided noiselessly into the running brook. And with tangled hair on the ragged sleeve, and peace in the heart under the wild black-thorn, with the glory of youth on the unconscious brow, the boy slept on, and, sleeping, smiled.

CHAPTER II.

A HERO IN RAGS.

It was the morning following that of which the events have been recorded in the last chapter, and just such another morning at the Fitzhugh homestead. The Judge was enjoying the combined luxury of the newspaper and his second cup of coffee, and Miss Fitzhugh, in the same listless attitude, was, to all intents and purposes, a thousand miles away from the family group. Genevieve was at her mother's side, anxious and expectant.

"Please let me go with brother Guy, mamma. He wants me to go with him—don't you, brother Guy?" pleadingly.

"Yes, let her go, mother. The ride will do her good, and I'm coming back early."

"Are you sure she won't be in the way?" asked the mother of her handsome boy. "You mustn't feel obliged to take her if you don't want to, dear."

"But I do want to take her—don't I, Trixie?" said Master Guy, stroking the soft hair of the child with a caressing hand.

"Yes, he does want to take me. He says he does, mamma. Mayn't I go?"

"Well, yes," assented the mother. And the child, after giving her brother an enthusiastic hug, flitted away to tell Uncle Ezekiel to have her pony saddled.

A half-hour later she was cantering lightly along the road, with Guy, mounted on a hunter, at her side. The young man was very fond of his little sister, and she fairly worshiped him in return. One of the stories that he never tired of telling was of how he once discovered the little lady, then a mite of five, awkwardly, but patiently, attempting to sew a rent in one of "Brother Guy's" coats. Crude, indeed, the result of that first sewing lesson, where love was the only teacher of the baby fingers, but the little maid was well satisfied with her work, and Guy—well, he had the coat still, and he never tired of telling the story.

So they cantered along on their way to Major Kenwood's plantation, where Guy intended to

spend the morning, checking their pace at intervals for Guy to observe more closely a tobacco patch here and there that showed superior cultivation, a neighbor's thoroughbred colts at pasture, or another's recently imported group of Jersey cattle.

"Did you know that Miss Susie Leonard is staying with Mrs. Kenwood?" Genevieve asked.

"No," answered Guy, interested at once, for Miss Leonard was a very pretty girl from Louisville, and Guy was at a susceptible age.

"Well, she is. Aunt Mamie told mamma so last evening."

Quoth Guy, after ambling on in silence for some moments: "We will have to make a very short visit if we intend getting back in time for dinner, Trixie."

"We won't be able to stay long," she assented, dubiously. "I wish we could stay there to dinner."

"So do I," said Guy, a flattering likeness of Miss Leonard's dimpled face passing before his mental vision. "It would be pleasanter riding back this afternoon. If I wasn't afraid mother might be worried, I'd stay."

"I have it!" he exclaimed, suddenly. "Arthur Boyce just passed us, and I'll ride back and ask him to stop and tell mother. He can't be more than a quarter from here now. Just wait right here and I'll be back in two minutes." And, tapping his hunter with the whip, the young man was off like a flash and at a speed that would have sadly distanced the best efforts of Genevieve's plump pony.

Glancing about her, the child saw a bed of sweet violets in a hollow strip of woodland just beyond the road. Leaping lightly from her saddle, she tethered the docile pony to an adjacent tree and ran to gather a bunch of flowers before Guy's return. She had just stretched her hand forward to pluck them, when she heard a low growl, and the next instant her eyes were fixed by a sight that rooted her to the spot with terror. A few yards distant, growling ominously, with blood-shot eyes and fierce mien, stood a dog, a great, ugly brute whose menacing attitude insured a speedy spring upon the defenseless child. She was ready to sink to the ground with fear, when there was a sound of quickly trampled bushes at her side

and a voice shouted: "Run for yer hoss, quick," and the next instant a barefooted boy in tattered garments, and with a knotted stick grasped firmly in his hand, dashed to her side. He was none too quick, for the maddened brute sprang at him fiercely, and received the heavy weight of the upraised cudgel on his nose. With a yell of pain the dog fell back, but only to spring a second time. The boy again swung his weapon aloft and brought it down with formidable force on the head of the brute, who, staggered instantaneously but not stunned, had in another instant fastened his teeth in the lad's left arm. Shortening his stick, the latter brought it down with all his force again and again on the head of the infuriated animal, who was tearing his shoulder savagely. It became a question of endurance between the boy and the beast. Though scarcely more than a minute had elapsed, the former was faint from pain and loss of blood, and plied his heavy stick with a feebler hand. But on the dog, too, the fierce combat told heavily. One blinded, blood-shot eye protruded from its socket, and the fierce tenacity of his hold weakened beneath the rain

of blows that fell upon his head. The struggles he had made to reach the throat of his antagonist ceased, and his increasing weight dragged upon the mangled shoulder of the boy. The latter, feeling rather than seeing the dog's worsted condition, in the lessened tenacity of his hold, felt, too, his own growing weakness, and with one final effort rained a succession of blows upon the brute's head that loosened his fierce hold at last and silenced him forever.

Guy, who had heard with terror the piercing shrieks that Genevieve had uttered after her hasty retreat to the road, had rushed to the spot with all the speed that the swift pace of his hunter could command, and in the moment that the vanquished dog fell to the ground, he had thrown himself from his panting steed at the side of his sister.

Completely overcome by the terror inspired by the deadly conflict that she had just witnessed, the child could only point hysterically to her gallant defender, who, faint and bloody, leaned tremblingly upon his rude weapon. In an instant Guy was at his side and caught him in his arms just as the fainting boy was sinking

to the ground. He had carried him to the roadside when Arthur Boyce, whose pace had been necessarily slower than that of the better mounted Guy, rode up and joined the group. Genevieve, whose nerves were sadly unstrung, gave a confused recital of the conflict, and when Guy learned that the injuries of the boy had been incurred in defense of his beloved sister, there remained no vestige of doubt in his mind as to the immediate course to be pursued. While he would carry the slender form of the boy on Arthur's horse, the latter, mounted on the fleet hunter, was to ride as fast as that animal could carry him to the Fitzhugh home, where he was to prepare Mrs. Fitzhugh for their arrival, and hasten back with the family carriage to meet Guy and his helpless charge. The slight weight of the latter was a light burden for the well-trained muscles of the young college athlete who carried him tenderly toward home, while Genevieve, gradually growing calmer, related the minuter details of the encounter. And Guy Fitzhugh, who believed, with all a Southron's fanaticism, in gentle blood, looked wonderingly on the plebeian features, the tangled hair and

the ragged garments of the young hero in his arms.

CHAPTER III.

THE VAGUE IDEAS OF A YOUNG BARBARIAN.

THE long journey of four miles had been accomplished at last, and John Greystone, unconscious, limp and deadly pale, with his slender wrist in the hand of the best physician in Florissant, lay between snowy linen sheets in the Fitzhugh mansion. The physician looked gravely at the livid, swollen wounds on the arm, shoulder and breast of his patient, and said that the extent of danger could only be determined by the condition of the dog at the time the wounds were inflicted. If the dog had not been mad, then rest and good nursing would soon put the boy on his feet again. If the animal had been rabid, hydrophobia would inevitably ensue. He cauterized the wounds

thoroughly, and left with the promise of an early call in the morning.

The boy did not want for careful nursing after that. All that refined thoughtfulness could suggest, and all that wealth could buy, were lavished upon the little social pariah, whose years had hitherto been passed among coarse, unlettered men and hollow-chested, slatternly women, who (young and old, regardless of sex) smoked vile tobacco in clay pipes, and were nearer in their habits and stunted mental growth to the brute creation, than to the cultured inhabitants of the home where one of their number was sheltered.

But for all the care that he received, the recovery of the patient was slow, and for a long time doubtful. The wounds yielded to treatment readily enough, but long-borne hardships, hunger and cold had planted their seeds in his system and sprung to fierce life in the weakness that had fallen upon him. Convalescence was slow after the fever—that hollowed more deeply the gaunt cheeks and wasted more cruelly the attenuated form—had spent its force.

But the crisis came, and Youth, gazing with the fearless stoicism of ignorance upon the dread portal of Death, conquered, and staggered back feebly into the sunshine of life.

One of the first thoughts that had suggested itself to the mind of Judge Fitzhugh was the expediency of acquainting the boy's parents with his critical condition. The prospect of the enforced entertainment of these relatives, though almost a necessity under the circumstances, was far from pleasant to contemplate. Judge Fitzhugh was one of those highly refined men who are absolutely pained by evidences of ill-breeding in others. He had been so carefully brought up himself that he could not abide the slightest grossness of manners in any one else, and was wont to remark that he would prefer as a *vis-a-vis* at table the most arrant knave who combined good manners with his knavery than any honest man who ate with his knife or masticated his food audibly. His sensitiveness on this point had assumed the proportions of a disease, and had been an actual obstacle in his legal profession. What member of the legal fraternity, present on the occasion, would ever

forget the memorable trial where he stopped abruptly in the middle of an eloquent appeal to thunder out to his astounded client that if he did not stop biting his nails he would throw up the case. The interruption was fatal, and the man went to the penitentiary for life, not for the crime he had committed, but because he had bitten his nails. With this historic anecdote in mind, the reader will appreciate the relief experienced when the invalid, in answer to the inquiry relative to the whereabouts of his parents, replied tersely:

"I ain't got none; leastways never heerd er havin' none."

"Well!" exclaimed his questioner, actually pleased at the doubtful nature of the outcast's parentage; while Genevieve looked wonderingly at her mother for an explanation of the unique problem, and Miss Fitzhugh vouchsafed a cutting remark on the unfeeling manner in which her brother delighted to probe the wounds of others.

Lying day after day in the heart of that cultured home, the boy could not fail to receive an insight into the unwritten laws of that hitherto

unknown class of society to which its members belonged. Quickly observant of every detail in the novel phase of existence about him, he wondered at first why Judge Fitzhugh, Guy and Doctor Shallcross never wore their hats in the room. There was no doubt that this was intentional, at least on the physician's part, for on several occasions he had borne his high silk hat in hand, and at these times generally accepted Mrs. Fitzhugh's offer to take it from him. "Do let me take your hat, doctor," she would say, naturally enough. And the boy wondered why she should want to do it.

There were no churches in the settlement from whence he had wandered, but at rare intervals a traveling preacher had spent a Sunday in the neighborhood, and, remembering that he was a weakly man and that the men had all doffed their hats in his presence, he wondered vaguely if the gentlemen removed their hats in deference to his own enfeebled condition. He noticed, too, that if the Judge or Guy were sitting down when either of the ladies entered the room, they would immediately rise and remain standing until the latter were seated. Indeed, the

uniform courtesy which the ladies of the household received from the sterner sex was the most unaccountable feature of his surroundings. On one occasion Mrs. Fitzhugh had asked him if he would not like a glass of water, and he had replied in the affirmative. Then, in strange contrast to all ethics pertaining to his former surroundings, the lady had requested her husband to go for the water, quite as a matter of course, and the latter had instantly risen from his easy chair and executed the errand smilingly. In the barren community where he had lived, where the dejected, slovenly, hollow-eyed women were like unto beasts of burden, as dumbly uncomplaining, he had seen big Bill Tubbs knock his wife down because she asked him to get a cinder for her pipe. There had appeared nothing monstrous to him in the action at the time, and if an excuse had been needed there was sufficient conveyed in the rough words that followed the brutal blow, "Now, yer derved fool, that'll learn yer ter get yer own cinders." If the question of Bill Tubbs' right in the matter had ever come up in that Land of Darkness, he would probably have decided it in the affirma-

tive. Why shouldn't he beat her? She was his own wife just the same as his underfed horse was his own. He beat the overburdened horse when it staggered at the plow; why shouldn't he beat his wife? Yet so responsive is youth that all former convictions (if a child's ideas can be called by the name) were uprooted like rotten stalks in the first week of convalescence. At first the old life seemed to glide away, to be severed from his existence, and appeared to have been borne by another than himself. Then its horrible deformities became apparent, and it grew loathsome at last like a hideous nightmare. Like a nightmare it grew unreal as the reality of his new surroundings made its impression on his nature.

He could not help feeling his own inferiority to those about him, ever most keenly in the gentle presence of Genevieve. He could not read; he could not have said the alphabet, and he had known few people who could write their names.

He acknowledged it bitterly to Genevieve the morning that she brought some of her one-syllable story books to his bedside. She had im-

mediately volunteered to teach him his letters; but the boy had refused, doggedly, saying "he weren't no scholard, and 'lowed he didn't want no book larnin'." But he had consented to be read to, and never tired of those wonderful tales that she unfolded to him in her sweet, childish voice. Even though the sense of his own abject ignorance was most galling when she was near, he was never happy in her absence, and would have been contented to lie there, weak and helpless, for all time, if he could only have looked upon her. He asked once to have his bed moved nearer to the window; but it was not with any wish for a nearer view of the flowers, or the trees, or the distant winding road, or the perfect lawn and well-kept gravel walk, that he had desecrated with his bare feet on that first morning—it was with the wild desire to see more often the child that he had saved; and if she were driving or riding he would wait for hours, longing for her return, never turning his face from the window lest he should miss the first glimpse of her dainty form in the distance. Smile, oh, reader, if you will, at this child's love, but never yet breathed purer, holier pas-

sion in the heart of man. And no woman, fair though she be, will ever have a worthier love laid at her shrine than that offered by the boy lover who has passed out of her life. And you, gentle one, over whose far-off grave the withered leaves are drifting, may have learned the depth of a boy's first love. Would you compare with it the vaunted love of the man who has left life's fairest hopes in the green valleys of youth behind him; who has torn with wanton hand the wondrous blossoms that he worshiped through the eyes of a child; who has found other gods than love, and knelt at every shrine that offered a nepenthe for the passing hour; who has entered the lists for the favor of mammon; who has fathomed the depth of woman's weakness and her wrongs—who has learned the lesson of self-interest and the cruel law of the survival of the fittest; would you compare with this first ideal love the vows of yon sin-wearied wooer of your hand? It was natural that he should have loved her, as natural as that the lily should open its petals to the sun.

CHAPTER IV.

AN OLD MAID'S HISTORY.

MISS FITZHUGH was in the boy's room oftenest when no other visitor was there. She was always dressed well, always as if she expected company, and she would sit for hours in her listless way, gazing at him vacantly, and never uttering a syllable. Sometimes, looking at her, he would grow drowsy and sink into a restless slumber, but when he wakened he would see her still sitting there in the same listless attitude, with the same vacant stare in her eyes. Once she laughed so suddenly, so weirdly, that the usually stolid boy asked abruptly what she was laughing at. "Why, at the clock," she said, pointing one thin finger toward it. "Didn't you hear it?"

"No," answered the boy, incredulously.

"No? How strange! The clock says: 'Wait till to-morrow—Wait till to-morrow—Wait till to-morrow.' Listen now, it is talk-

ing again: 'He is coming—He is coming—He is coming,'” she repeated, as if interpreting the secret language of the odd-looking black clock on the mantel.

“It hasn't talked for a long time before,” she said, wearily. “Nobody else understands it. I'm glad they don't, for we couldn't have any secrets then. It's an awful tale-bearer” (looking at the carved time-piece half fearfully). “It tells me lots of things they say about me. And to think they never know it. Listen; it's talking: ‘What a joke—What a joke—What a joke.’” She nodded at it pleasantly as she repeated the words, then, turning suddenly on the boy, asked: “Do you like Judge Fitzhugh?”

“Yes,” he answered.

She bent toward the clock in a listening attitude: “What a joke—What a joke—What a joke,” she repeated, in perfect time with the swinging pendulum.

“Why?” asked the outcast.

“He hates them—He hates them—He hates them,” she repeated, weirdly, in answer to his question, ever smiling at the clock.

"Hates who?" asked the boy.

"Common people — Common people — Common people." Then, rising languidly, she started to leave the room, but at the threshold turned again, and, nodding fantastically at the clock, repeated: "What a joke—What a joke—What a joke!"

That evening Nanette, the slave woman who was Miss Fitzhugh's particular attendant, rushed into the room with dilated eyes to inform Judge Fitzhugh that "Miss Tildah had him again." And the Judge hastened from the room. A minute later there was a sound as of fierce struggling overhead; then the listening boy heard one piercing shriek, followed by a sound as of a body falling. His temples throbbed wildly, and across his mind flashed the hideous memory of the night that Bill Tubbs knocked his wife down because she had asked for a cinder to light her pipe.

If there is aught in the new life, John Grey-stone, akin to the loathsome past, it is the presence of Sin and Sorrow. Locked and secreted away in many a lordly mansion, well hidden under many a velvet robe, but the same

twin sisters that stalked gaunt and bare through the turf-covered dwellings of Egypt.

But let us hasten to the chamber that Aunt Tildah calls her own, the dreariest room in all the habitation.

There was no apparent reason why the room should have been a dreary one, for it was the sunniest in the house, with great broad casements, a soft carpet and costly old-fashioned mahogany furniture. Yet, for all that, it was undeniably dreary, even on that bright July afternoon. It may have been because of the absence of any sign of woman's handiwork; it may have been because of the rigid precision with which every article of furniture was placed—in strange contrast with the mass of spider-webs in the corners of the ceiling; it may have been because of the empty bird-cage, with its tarnished gilt wires; or the lack of books on the bare marble-top table; or the lack of fire between the rusty teeth of the unused grate; it may have been because of the rotten branch of yonder elm that stretched like a gigantic skeleton arm, the fingers fantastically twisted against the very casement—

ghastly, clutching fingers, dead fingers that one might dread to look through on a moonlit night; it may have been because of the dead look in the staring eyes of the woman on the bed; it may have been because of any or all of these reasons that the room was dreary, but dreary it was—undeniably, oppressively dreary. There are few lives that—if laid bare before us—would not reveal histories unguessed before; hidden depths of romance, quicksands of sin; years laid waste by the fierce conflict of human passion; features of reality—sublime, hideous, grotesque—strangely different, all, from the masks that hide them in the walks of life.

But a few years before, and there was no dearth of suitors for the hand of Tildah Fitzhugh; there was no lighter step in the dance, no fairer form on the saddle, no darker eyes in the moonlight, no merrier laugh among the patrician beauties of all the country round than that of Tildah Fitzhugh. She was always a nervous, delicate creature, but her peculiar temperament only deepened the sensitive roses in her cheeks and the scintillant sparkle in her

eyes. She was a dowerless beauty, for her father's second marriage had been a love match, and Noel had inherited all of the first wife's property; so it was that all the proud kin of the Fitzhughs naturally expected that she would select some young wooer with broad acres of his own and slaves enough to work them.

As for her brother, he had no fonder desire, and, as far as he could—for in those days family prestige ranked above money in Southern society—he drew about her the scions of the wealthiest families among his numerous connections and wide circle of acquaintances. Careful that she should see more of these chosen ones than of others less eligible, his interference extended no further, for he was a devout believer in the doctrine of propinquity. “Whenever I hear of a misalliance, I invariably blame the parents as the real culprits,” he was wont to remark to his young wife, with easy confidence. “In nine cases out of ten, investigation would prove that they had utterly ignored the law of propinquity. There is nothing more natural than for young people to fall in love—I fell in so deep myself once

that I fear I shall never get out again," with a smile at Mrs. Fitzhugh. "If they must fall in love, it naturally follows that it will be with persons of the opposite sex with whom they are brought in contact. The problem points its own solution: all you have to do is to bring them in contact with persons who are eligible. When I hear that Miss Vivien de Montmorency has eloped with Smith, I don't blame the young lady half as much as I do her parents. They should have taken care that she did not come in contact with persons like Smith, and should have provided a more suitable soil for her fancies to take root in by surrounding her with persons of her own station in life. Half the marital misery of the country is due to the general ignorance of the law of propinquity."

With this philosophical conclusion in mind, the reader can imagine the consternation of the profound disciple of propinquity when his young wife made the announcement one morning that his sister Tildah was engaged to the telegraph operator of the town, a young man who was not only abominably poor, but was

actually destitute of family connections worthy of the name.

“Impossible !” ejaculated Mr. Fitzhugh, pushing away his coffee and laying down the journal. He glanced quickly toward his sister’s chair, but it was vacant, for she had glided from the room only a few moments before.

“Not at all impossible, my dear,” said Mrs. Fitzhugh. “On the contrary, it is true.”

“How do you know? Who has said such a thing?” demanded her husband.

“Tildah told me herself last night, and asked me to tell you this morning.”

Fallen forever the idol of propinquity; fallen the simple law that would have let the vision roam at will, and bound love within a paling that a child’s fancy might have leaped; fallen the monument of man’s folly that could think to bind young love with so slight a barrier—love, before whose strength duty, religion, poverty, wealth, caste, are as withered leaves in the path of the wind.

How the young plebeian had met and wooed and won the fair patrician are not essential

details to the recital of this story. Yet the railway station was not so far from the home of the Fitzhughs. The laughing eyes of the venturesome young man who kept the tryst in the old orchard beamed as softly, if more audaciously than those of the young gentlemen who rode their thoroughbreds over the carriageway; there were flower-decked moors and woodland dells; there were silvery streams and moonlit nights; there was youth and romance; there were eager lips that asked all things, and drooping eyes that refused nothing; there was a new idol raised on the altar of love, and an old one shattered on the pedestal of folly. Alas! for the philosophy of propinquity.

Mr. Fitzhugh was not of a nature to accept defeat without a struggle. He sought his sister and argued the matter with her calmly. He did not attempt to conceal his mortification that a Fitzhugh, one of his own blood, should have held clandestine meetings with a lover whom she could not have openly acknowledged. While he deplored her youthful folly, he would not, could not, believe, on any less authority than her own word, that the affair

was anything more serious than a flirtation. But Miss Tildah did not hesitate to assure him that she intended to marry the man of her choice, and all her brother's pleading and argument could not alter her determination. He urged the disgrace of such an alliance, the duty that she owed to her name and family, but she remained obdurate.

She acknowledged proudly that her lover was poor—possessing no means beyond his slender salary—but said that she would rather live in a cabin with him than in a palace with any other man in the world. Only when he spoke of her delicate health and the impossibility of her enduring the hardships that would inevitably fall to her lot in such a sphere did she appear at all affected by her brother's worldly wisdom. Then a shade fell across her face momentarily. “That was the only real obstacle,” she said, “but I told him about it; and—and I am going to marry him. He will not always be poor.”

“Of course you will expect nothing from me in the event of such a marriage,” said Mr. Fitzhugh, hotly.

"No," she answered, with all the scorn of youth and love. "He wouldn't have me take a cent from you."

So the interview ended, but the determination of Noel Fitzhugh never faltered, and from that hour the dominant purpose of his life was to break the obnoxious engagement. In referring to the delicacy of his sister's health, he had alluded to an undeniably serious obstacle to the proposed marriage. Though the real cause of her weakness had been carefully hidden from her, it was one that would have been deemed an insurmountable barrier to the match by less biased minds than Noel Fitzhugh's. Tildah Fitzhugh was an epileptic. She had been under skillful treatment, and the disease had made but slight progress, yet more than once she had fallen in the terrible spasms incident to the malady. Touched by that dread hand, the roses had fled from cheeks that assumed the ghastly pallor of death; the quick gleam of intelligence in the soft eyes changed with strange rapidity to a fixed stare of vacancy; and over the sensitive lips so wondrously fair in health had dribbled

the sluggish froth of epilepsy. Small wonder then, that Mr. Fitzhugh dreaded the prospective marriage. True, he had desired and intended that his sister should marry eventually. The Louisville specialist whose services he had employed had told him that, with constant care and proper treatment, ultimate recovery would be assured, and she had not wanted for the necessary attention. In the event of her recovery, which he never doubted, he had looked forward to her marriage with some man whose wealth could secure for her all the comforts and luxuries that would probably be necessary for the maintenance of her restored health.

Having failed as signally as might have been expected in his interview with the woman, the sorely troubled philosopher of propinquity sought the man, with the laudable intention of quenching the flame of love by the force of reason. But he found the usually more reasonable animal as obdurate as his sister had been and as unsusceptible to any practical view of the affair. Mr. Fitzhugh had originally conceived the reasonable opinion that the successful wooer

had had a view to financial advancement in the suit, and had mentally weighed the advisability of ingeniously gratifying any desire of that nature that might exist. He was a man of wide influence and large interests, and could have compassed such an arrangement without compromising himself by a deliberate offer. But, although his prejudice against what he termed the common classes was too deeply rooted for him to relinquish the hasty conclusion that he had reached, there was that in the young man's bearing that effectually restrained him from venturing upon even the most ingeniously worded propositions regarding his worldly advancement. Finally he informed him briefly that Tildah was an epileptic. At the terrible and unexpected announcement the lover's cheek blanched, and the skillful strategist who had dealt the blow exulted over the prospects of a speedy victory. But his exultation was short-lived. After a moment's thought the listener dismissed the charge from his own mind as untrue, as a gross exaggeration uttered for the sole purpose of alienating him from the object of his love. The mere contemplation

of such a thought was unworthy of him, for he and Tildah had previously exhausted the subject of the delicate health of the latter, and to think that she could have concealed her true condition from him was for love to doubt the faith of love.

The lamp burned late that night in Mr. Fitzhugh's library, where paced a wakeful, sorely puzzled man. Reason, family, precedent and blood—like propinquity—seemed at fault, and he was like a pilot who has lost sails, compass and rudder in the storm. He might have tried harsher methods—he might have locked his sister up, and threatened the audacious parvenu who had aspired for alliance with the best blood in the country. But his sister's health was of paramount consideration, and her stubborn, bold-eyed lover might have proved troublesome; there had never before been a breath of scandal on the Fitzhugh name, and, besides, it was not Noel Fitzhugh's way. Other means of averting the catastrophe would offer; it had been folly to proceed to extremities while other measures remained untried. Meanwhile—and the troubled man thanked God devoutly for it—the family

skeleton was confined to that particular locality in which skeletons of well conducted and refined families are popularly believed to abide—the closet.

But the morrow brought with it no solution of the problem and no relief to the anxiety of Mr. Fitzhugh. For the first time in his life he spoke harshly to his young wife, upbraiding her for not having been more watchful of his sister. He went through another stormy interview with the latter, by which nothing was gained, and the breach between them widened. Bitter words were uttered by both, taunting, cruel words that could never be forgotten, and that left scars upon the memory as the overseer's lash left scars on the body of the plantation slaves.

“Did he tell you that his father was a street-car conductor in Boston?” sneered Mr. Fitzhugh.

“Yes,” she replied, hotly. “And that his mother was a seamstress; but if you have anything to say against them, you had better say it to him. He is in the old orchard now, and I am going there to meet him.”

"You are not," thundered her brother, and, darting before her, slammed the door violently, locked it and placed the key in his pocket.

The baffled woman gave him one look of deadly hatred, then fell to the floor in violent spasms. Hastily unlocking the door, he called loudly for assistance, and Mrs. Fitzhugh, followed by the servants, rushed into the room. In that moment the fearful contortions of the afflicted woman suggested a sudden thought to her brother, who bade Zekiel run to the old orchard as fast as he could and tell the gentleman there that Miss Fitzhugh wished to see him at the house immediately. Rushing up to the expectant lover with dilated eyes and awe-stricken visage, the negro delivered his message, and added that "Miss Tildah was jes took awful." Fear lent wings to the feet of the young man. He flew toward the house, and as he dashed up the steps he met Mr. Fitzhugh.

"Tildah!" he gasped; "where is she?"

Without a word, Mr. Fitzhugh conducted him to the room where the stricken woman lay in agonizing struggles. "It is an epileptic fit," he whispered, holding the young man back as

he would have rushed to her side. There was nothing more said. What use for words, with that helpless wreck of womanhood before them, fearful, silent eloquence in every struggle. It was difficult to recognize in the livid face before him the fair features of the woman of his love. It was a bitter blow that had fallen with bitter suddenness, and the young man pressed his hands to his face as if the sight were more than he could bear. But more bitter than the thought of her agony, more bitter than all else in that supreme moment of mental torture, was the conviction that forced itself upon him. "And she never told me," he muttered, as if oblivious of all else save the thrice bitter knowledge that where he had trusted so loyally—blindly as only love trusts—he had been deceived. "Come away," he heard some one say, at last, and, mechanically obeying the voice and the touch upon his arm, he followed Mr. Fitzhugh into that gentleman's library.

"Be seated," said the latter, but the request was ignored or unheard, and both men remained standing.

"I think you will see now the impossibility of

a marriage between my sister and yourself," said Mr. Fitzhugh. "As I told you once before, she is an epileptic, and the scene that you have just witnessed is not an unusual one. It is only through the constant treatment and attention that wealth commands that her recovery can be hoped for, and even then a life of luxury will be necessary for her. You will see—you cannot fail to understand that marriage is out of the question."

"Out of the question," repeated the young man slowly, and as if to himself. Out of the question forever, with that betrayed trust before him. He drew his hand across his eyes as if to clear his mental vision; then he said: "I will not see her again. Tell her for me that, above everything in this world, I will hope always for her peace and happiness. Tell her that if she ever blames herself for anything, in thinking of me, that I forgave her freely before I left this room."

The enigmatical nature of the words non-plused Mr. Fitzhugh, but he was affected by the evident emotion of the man who had uttered them.

"If I can do anything for you, away from here," he began, but the other stopped him with an impatient gesture. There was a moment of awkward silence; then he turned and left the house and disappeared in the orchard. That night he looked his last upon Florissant, and was never seen there again; but Tildah Fitzhugh never married, and there was a skeleton in the closet and a clock in the house that talked.

CHAPTER V.

"BLOOD IS BLOOD."

THE boy upstairs was growing better, as was daily evidenced by his increasing appetite. The typhoid fever that had followed the shock consequent on the dog's bites had been conquered by the pellets and powders of the grave gentleman in black, who announced the danger past about the same time that his patient arrived at a satisfactory conclusion as to the cause of the daily removal of the physician's hat.

But if the inoffensive and professional-looking tile of the learned Doctor Shallcross had been a problem for the boy, the latter had been a no less perplexing problem for Judge Fitzhugh, presenting itself in the formula of "What shall I do with him?"

When the Judge reflected that he might have been one of a dozen ragged brothers and sisters who might have preferred exorbitant demands for gratitude at all times and seasons for all time to come, he thanked his stars that Genevieve's protector had been a foundling, instead of one of the ragged tribe that his fancy had created in the potential mood. As the boy's strength increased, the subject of his future became one of discussion in the household. The Judge himself had thought of retaining him in his service as an assistant gardener, where he could be kept under proper supervision and restrained from his unfortunate nomadic tendencies, and at the same time learn a useful trade, which would secure him a means of livelihood in the sphere to which he had been born. As to the amount of gratitude due the outcast, the Judge had repudiated all romantic ideas and naturally

based it upon purely reasonable grounds. Doctor Shallcross had told him that while the dog's attack had precipitated the boy's illness, there was a prior cause in the deprivations that he had suffered, a cause that was bound to have its effect sooner or later in a severe attack of illness, and it really had been to his advantage that the fever had come upon him in the luxurious Fitzhugh mansion instead of on the roadside.

Guy—who had not yet reached the philosophical plane where the exalted ideas of his father had their being, and who had not studied as profoundly the depths of cause and effect, aided by the vision of the astute medical practitioner—frankly expressed the opinion that too much could not be done for the boy. His solution of the problem was to have him sent to the same school that he attended, and entered in the primary branches. With a thorough education and the proper influences about him his future would be assured, and with these advantages he saw no reason why all spheres would not be open to him. This was a very radical view for a Fitzhugh, and one that the head of

that patrician family was not likely to espouse. "Blood was blood" in his mind, and the course proposed by his son would only force the boy into a life of endless humiliations that would increase as he progressed in his studies. Judge Fitzhugh had never believed in the education of the masses; in truth, he was bitterly opposed to it, and consistency forbade him to harbor such a plan. As for Mrs. Fitzhugh, that estimable lady had very few ideas of her own, and had never found it necessary to cultivate them; but she did believe in the remarkable assertion of her husband that "blood was blood," and could not fail to observe the difficulties that would be entailed by following the course proposed by Guy.

"Class distinction is a necessary institution, my son," said the Judge, with an eloquent wave of his hand; "and when you get to be my age you will understand it as I do now." And Mrs. Fitzhugh was fain to agree with the wisdom of those words.

Had the Judge known it, he might have pointed an illustration from the fact that the unconscious subject of their discussion had

already learned his first lesson of caste in enforced observation of his surroundings. He felt that he was unaccountably different from this new order of people, and that all those he had known before were different. He could not help acknowledging that he himself was very much like the young relatives of the memorable Bill Tubbs and other juvenile inhabitants of Egypt. He quickly conceived the idea that Judge Fitzhugh was a man of incalculable wealth, and gradually arrived at the easy conclusion that it was the possession of this wealth that made the main difference between the Fitzhughs and the Tubbses. If Bill Tubbs could have dressed always in brand-new clothes and been driven in a buggy behind a fleet, strong horse, instead of driving an ill-fed, lame one in a broken-down cart, it stood to reason that he would not have been so filthy in appearance or so cruel to the horse; and if he had had black people to do everything he said, he wouldn't have knocked his wife down when she wanted a cinder for her pipe, but would have simply told one of the black people to get it for her. One final object

in the boy's mind was fixed: he did not want to be like the Tubbs boys any more, and he did want very much to be like Master Guy, or as much like him as a boy of fifteen could be like a young man who measured five feet eleven and had a mustache.

It was at this period, and when he had grown so much stronger that Doctor Shallcross had promised to let him go downstairs the next day, that the following conversation was wafted to his eager ears from the veranda below: "Have you heard the latest about the Ronan boys, Martha?" asked Mrs. Kenwood, who had driven in with her husband and Miss Leonard to spend the day with Mrs. Fitzhugh.

"Do you mean those Ronan boys who used to live over near Bainbridge?" questioned the hostess.

"Yes, those are the boys. You remember they went out to California three years ago. Well, they say they have struck a real bonanza out there—millions."

"You don't mean it!" said Judge Fitzhugh. "Why, they had a hard time getting enough money to buy an ox team when they started.

They were worthless boys, too, and came from common stock. Old Ronan used to run a canal boat up north somewhere, and he had a brother who was tried for counterfeiting."

"There seems no limit to the amount of gold in that country," said Major Kenwood. "There have been a score of fabulous fortunes taken from the mines there in as many weeks. Men start out there with an ox-team, a kit of mining tools and a wagon-load of ragged children, and a few months later we hear that they are millionaires. If it keeps on, the Eastern States will be depopulated, and we'll have a new country made up of plebeian capitalists."

"It certainly looks ominous," assented the host. "Who do you think is the latest millionaire elect?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, unless it is Ezekiel," laughingly.

"No, sir; it's that miserable old scamp Claypeck. He asked me very coolly this morning to lend him a hundred dollars to buy an outfit, and said he'd send me back two hundred six months after he reached the gold field."

"I suppose that older Ronan boy will come

back now and marry Jessie Llorral," said Mrs. Fitzhugh. "You know he was awfully in love with her."

"I hardly think, my dear," interposed her husband, "that Llorral would give his consent. True, he does not belong to our first families, but his people are far above the Ronans. The Ronans, my dear, are very common people. Why, Llorral wouldn't let the girl see young Ronan for some time before he left."

"I have always thought that was the very reason he went away," remarked Guy, who was usually given to romantic ideas in the presence of Miss Leonard.

"I tell you, Judge, times have changed since we were boys," quoth the Major. "Money buys everything now, and though young Ronan, poor, might have wooed Jessie Llorral for a lifetime, and died a wooer, young Ronan, rich, will come back here and marry her in a fortnight, if he wants to."

"I have always maintained—" began the Judge, when there was a tinkle of goblets in the distance.

"Oh, here is Zekiel with the sangaree," said Mrs. Fitzhugh. "Major, this is made after my own recipe, and I want your candid opinion as to its merits."

The connoisseur sipped the tempting beverage thoughtfully. "It is excellent, excellent," he said. "Judge, may I ask where you purchased this claret?" And what Judge Fitzhugh had always maintained was lost to history.

The conversation gradually drifted into small talk. The ladies discussed impartially the merits and demerits of their friends and the new fashion in bonnets, and naturally drifted into scandal.

The gentlemen talked of horses and cattle, crops and niggers, and as naturally drifted into politics—a harmonious field where all Southern gentlemen could meet amicably, even at that early day, in a general and reasonable condemnation of the Yankees.

The young beauty from Louisville and Guy, at their own end of the veranda, wandered a million leagues away from the fields of scandal and politics in the amaranth realm of romance, and saw new beauties in the sunset and reve-

lations in the stars. And Genevieve caught fire-flies on the lawn and raced on the gravel walk with Don, a very courtier in his pretense of inability to keep pace with her light footsteps. The evening waned, and, the hour of departure having arrived, the Kenwoods drove away and the Fitzhughs disappeared from the veranda, Guy—looking pensively in the direction taken by the Kenwood carriage—being the last to go.

Then another group took noiseless possession of the broad portico: female figures in costumes of a generation before, and erect male figures, who remained standing with grave punctiliousness until the ladies were seated. They chatted in high, cracked voices of bonnets and neighbors; of politics and “niggahs”; of youth and love. They were so very well bred that the air exhaled by their thin nostrils assumed a slight bluish tinge, and a male figure squeaked out complacently that “blood was blood.” There was not an old maid among them—not one; and the skeleton upstairs in the closet never put in an appearance. But the clock heard every word that they said, and in the

dreariest room in the house the shadow of the skeleton hand at the casement crept slowly across the moonlit floor, very slowly, but always toward the still figure on the bed; grasping at everything within its reach—at the chair, where she sat for hours at a time brooding; at her clothing; at a slender band of gold on her finger. It glided up the shrunken arm to the wasted breast and the thin throat, and to her very face, touching stealthily the colorless lips, the hollow cheeks, the circles under her closed eyes, the gray strands in her loose hair, making mystic signs over her forehead like the weird hand of an invisible necromancer who had hypnotized her.

With the gray streaks of dawn the ghosts disappeared decorously from the veranda, the shadowy gentlemen standing motionless by their chairs until the last lady had withdrawn, and a few minutes later a common boy, so very common that he would have been petrified in the refined blue air that they had breathed, opened the hall door noiselessly and struck out across the lawn for the road.

And it was full three hours later when Dinah, with consternation depicted on her shining black face, informed Mrs. Fitzhugh, who had rung for her: "Dat boy hab runned away. Jes' got up by hisself an' runned away in de' night-time."

CHAPTER VI.

CHANGED FORTUNES.

"You remember that boy who ran away from us so mysteriously thirteen years ago, Martha?" asked Judge Fitzhugh on his return from down town late one afternoon.

"Yes," replied his wife, looking up questioningly.

"Well, that boy and the Northern capitalist who came into town yesterday as a probable purchaser of the Alanson coal-mines are one and the same."

"You don't mean it!" exclaimed Mrs. Fitzhugh. "It seems impossible!"

"Well, it's all very simple and at the same

time appears extraordinary. It's another story of a bonanza gold-mine. After he ran away from here he worked his way out to California, though how he did it the Lord only knows. Once there, he struck out for the gold country and worked for years in the mines with varying success. Finally he struck it rich, and is part owner now in one of the biggest bonanzas in California. They say down town that he can sign his check for a million."

"How do you know he is the same boy we had here? Have you seen him?"

"No, but Lockwood told me. You know he is trying to sell the Alanson mines to him, and drove him out there this morning to look at them. Well, he told Colonel Lockwood that he had tramped all over Florissant barefooted thirteen years ago, and, as his name is an uncommon one, there is no doubt he is the very same boy."

At that moment the graceful figure of a young girl was seen through the foliage at the further end of the lawn. "I wonder what Genevieve would think of him now?" Judge Fitzhugh questioned.

His wife looked up with the faintest expression of astonishment on her face. "I hardly think she will see anything of him," she said. Then, as if on second thought: "I suppose, though, he will come here before he leaves town. Maybe he will consider us in a manner under obligations to him. Do you think he will?"

"I don't know. I hardly think so. With his immense wealth we could not be of any service to him now, unless possibly in a social way."

"He could scarcely expect that," said Mrs Fitzhugh, raising her head a little proudly. "I should think social recognition would be as awkward for him as it would be for us. You remember what an ignorant, common boy he was. He came from the very commonest class of people. I don't suppose thirteen years of that rough Western life have improved him any."

"No," assented the husband.

"It was fortunate that dreadful dog attacked him instead of Genevieve," continued Mrs. Fitzhugh, glancing toward the graceful form

near the gate. "Guy"—the mother's voice trembled slightly at that name—"Guy always declared that the boy voluntarily imperiled his life to save Genevieve."

"Yes, I know," said Judge Fitzhugh; "but I always thought it improbable. Genevieve was frightened almost to death, and never could give a clear account of it. The boy must have been on the spot at the time, and, being more aggressive, would seem the more natural object of the brute's attack. However, we did all we could for him, and we couldn't have foreseen his running away."

After a silence of several minutes, Judge Fitzhugh said aloud, yet musingly, as though to himself: "There's enough coal in that old field yonder beyond the orchard to fuel Christian County for a century. There is a fortune waiting there for any man who will take the trouble and has the means to dig it out."

"Don't you think you could begin mining it in a small way?" asked Mrs. Fitzhugh.

"No; it is out of the question. The place is mortgaged now up to the last notch, and that cursed—I beg your pardon, Martha—Ryson

knows I won't be able to pay the interest in October. He knows as well as I do the value of that coal-field, and he is just waiting until he has turned me out to start the mines and make a fortune out of my property—property that has been in my family for seventy-five years." The man rose from his seat and paced the veranda with restless strides, while Mrs. Fitzhugh looked at him anxiously.

"Couldn't you borrow enough to make a start on from some of our friends?" she asked, hesitatingly, at last.

"Our friends haven't any money to loan out at the present time," he answered, bitterly, pausing near her chair. "There are not a half dozen farms in the county unmortgaged to-day, and God knows where it is all going to end. I had thought of trying to interest Northern capital, but what would be the use? The Yankees would know my helplessness, and would hardly form a benevolent association for my benefit. Even if I made the attempt, Ryson would know of it, and checkmate me. He's a Yankee himself."

The Judge resumed his restless stride in

silence. There was something on his mind of which he wished to speak, but he waited in the hope that his wife would mention it first. Perhaps the idea never entered her head at all, or it may have been that she divined her husband's thoughts, and shrank from discussion of the subject, for the latter was again the first to break the silence. "It wouldn't cost John Greystone one-tenth as much to lift that mortgage as it would to buy the Alanson mines, and it would be a better investment for him," he said, at last.

"Would he do it?" asked Mrs. Fitzhugh.

"I can't say until I have seen him; but it is worth the trial—well worth it. I will go down and see him right after supper. And, see here, Martha, I'll have to take him over the ground to-morrow, and I don't see how I can very well avoid inviting him to the house."

"You can have the library all to yourselves."

"I don't mean that," said Judge Fitzhugh. "It is possible that the man may want to be invited here socially. I don't say that he will, but it is possible. If he does, it will be as disagreeable for me as it will be for you, but if he

looks at my offer favorably, and his acceptance of it depends on an invitation to dinner, we will have to invite him, that is all. I don't see any way out of it."

As the reader already knows, thirteen years have passed by since we last visited at the aristocratic home of the Fitzhughs. For them, as for thousands of other wealthy families in the stricken South, those years had been fraught with events stirring enough, sad enough to have filled a lifetime.

Judge Fitzhugh had organized one of the first regiments raised in the State, and had marched away at its head under a silken banner, the stars and bars of which had been wrought daintily by the fair hands of patrician beauties who put their very souls into the work; who girded on their husband's swords; who, in the last years of the terrible conflict, when defeat was inevitable, when ruin stalked nearer to the impoverished homes in every successive battle lost, sent their striplings into the field, and alone among their helpless little ones fought the wolf of want from the door.

Guy—handsome, generous-hearted Guy, fresh from the honors of college, first in the empire of the mother's heart—Captain Guy Fitzhugh, had ridden gayly away one bright morning. Gallantly erect in his new uniform rode Captain Guy on his black charger, bright shone the polished scabbard at his side, soft nestled the sunny lock of Genevieve's hair on his young heart; but there were tears in the straining eyes that watched the brilliant cavalcade as it wound slowly out of sight. What were the mighty issues in the mother's mind? What mattered the freedom of the wretched blacks or the stronger binding of their chains? What mattered the secession of the South or its retention in the Union, to the mother? Her boy, her Guy, had ridden away to the field of slaughter. Well may the mother look long at her departing son; well may she rush up the stairs and to the highest window for one more glance at the familiar form, at the flowing locks of her boy, for never again will she see him. Death, that spared the gray-haired father, sought the son in the glory of youth, found him charging at the head of his company, with a shout on his lips

and bared sword in his hand—and smote him down.

When the bitter end came at last, General Fitzhugh returned home to find himself well-nigh penniless. His five hundred negroes had been made free men, and the remnant of his broad acres that remained had been mortgaged heavily to meet the wants of the helpless ones at home. He raised a further small sum on the land and somehow or other managed to get along.

The Fitzhugh horses went and the Fitzhugh carriage went, and several costly paintings and many rare books went, and, in the course of time, even the Fitzhugh diamonds went; but the dignity, the prestige of the Fitzhugh blood remained in the proud potency of better days, as immovable as the faithfulness of Uncle Zekiel and Aunt Dinah, the only darkies who had not run away from the old homestead. General Fitzhugh in his faded broadcloth was as exacting as ever the Judge had been in the brightest days of prosperity. Mrs. Fitzhugh, who walked down town in her turned silk, received as many bows, as many friendly

glances as ever Mrs. Fitzhugh in carriage and diamonds had received. Miss Genevieve Fitzhugh, in that simple muslin dress, with a knot of ribbon about her slender waist and a rose in her bonny hair, was the acknowledged belle of the county. And, pray, why shouldn't she be? She, the daughter of the first family! The blue blood of the Fitzhugh race remained untainted, and that proud family accepted, as the most natural thing in the world, the deference of many of their less heavily mortgaged neighbors.

"Family, sir," the Judge would say, with a graceful wave of his right hand, "is recognized only in the South, sir. In the North, sir, your social standing depends on your bank account. A tanner, a cobbler, a blacksmith, can secure a social *entrée* in the North if his bank account is only large enough, and his sons and daughters marry into the best circles—God save the mark!—if the marriage settlement is only big enough, sir. Thank God, sir, it is different with us. Blood is blood in the South, sir." And no one disputed that remarkable assertion.

The one member of the family who had been changed least by time and trouble — perhaps because her whole mind and body had been warped so much already by those potent causes—was Aunt Tildah. Her hair was a little grayer, her antipathy toward the Judge a little more apparent, her form a little more wasted, and her conversations with the black clock a trifle more frequent and prolonged; but, for all that, you would have found her the least changed of any in the household. I am not sure that she did not derive a certain amount of secret pleasure from the misfortunes of her brother.

There were two new-comers to whom the reader has not yet been introduced. Both had entered the community perfect strangers, and yet—though they had come unrecommended, were homely to a degree, were troublesome and noisy, though they spoke an unintelligible jargon of their own, and, while belonging to the sterner sex, exhibited no more appreciation for the charms of the Florissant fair than for the plausible doctrines of Judge Fitzhugh—strange as it may seem, they had been wel-

came into the sacred precincts of the Fitzhugh home and into the best social circle of Florissant, and were even more popular with the young ladies than with members of their own sex. At this momentous period of the family history the elder was twelve years old and the younger ten, and it is unnecessary to state that both were Fitzhughs.

And with this re-introduction to old friends and a brief glimpse at the changed circumstances that surrounded them, the reader will better understand the conversation that has been held by Judge and Mrs. Fitzhugh on the subject of one John Greystone.

Uncle Zekiel's best efforts had been expended on his master's apparel that evening ere the latter set out for the "City Hotel," where Mr. Greystone had taken up his quarters. It was significant of the latter's plebeian origin that he had chosen that hotel instead of the "Southern," which was always patronized by the best families.

As to the respective merits of the two hostleries, I can only say that the one to which the Judge is now directing his footsteps is the

favorite resort of traveling salesmen, a respectable class of gentlemen known more widely under the significant appellation of "drummers."

Our pedestrian was the recipient of numerous salutes (military recognition being quite in vogue at that period) as he passed down the streets, and, as the titles of major, colonel, captain and even general were constantly on his lips in the recognition of the salutes, it is presumed that Florissant held its own as a Southern city in the matter of titles. The gratification of that affable proprietor, Mr. Sharpe, at the unwonted appearance of blue blood in his establishment was undisguised.

"Is Mr. Greystone in?" asked the Judge.

"Yes, sir. Would you like to see him?"

"Just send this card to him, will you?" said the Judge.

"Yes, sir. Sambo, take this card to Colonel Greystone, and" (*sotto voce*) "tell me how many lamps is burnin' in his room. Won't you have a chair, Judge?"

"No, I thank you," the latter responded. He preferred not to be seen seated in the lobby of the "City Hotel."

Sambo presently returned with the information that Colonel Greystone had said, "would de gemman please walk upstairs," and (to Mr. Sharpe) "dey was twelb lamps burning in de Colonel's room."

Judge Fitzhugh was conducted by Mr. Sharpe himself to the apartments of his lamp-loving guest, who rose and approached his visitor as the latter entered.

"Welcome to Florissant, Mr. Greystone," said the older man, affably, as they shook hands.

"I am trying to make myself comfortable here," said his host. "I see you notice the illumination. That man Sharpe had one smoky lamp in this room, and I told him to buy a dozen more at my expense. I had a new carpet put down, too. There's nothing like enjoying civilization."

"Nothing, Mr. Greystone," assented the Judge, whose attention had, indeed, been attracted by the formidable array of lamps.

"Have a cigar?" said the other, handing him a box. "They're good ones; twenty-five dollars a hundred."

"Ah, indeed! There is nothing like a good cigar," remarked the Judge, pleasantly, as he selected one from the box.

Now Mr. Greystone, having also helped himself, bit off one end of the weed unevenly, lighted it over one of the many illuminators, and proceeded to puff at it fiercely. Not so the connoisseur before him. That gentleman carefully cut the end of his cigar, then, placing the other end in his mouth, blew any particles of dust from the filler, and, abstracting a lucifer from a silver match-box that his great grandfather had used, lighted his cigar in as leisurely, as gentlemanly, a manner as ever cigar was lighted. He enjoyed a good cigar—as who does not in that tobacco-growing country?—and his plans assumed tangible form in the curling smoke.

"I only heard of your arrival among us this morning," he said. "I heard you had come down as a prospective purchaser of the Alanson mines."

"I hadn't heard of the mines before," said Greystone. "Mr. Lockwood called and made me an offer and drove me out there to see them."

"Then you don't think of purchasing?"

"Well, I guess gold-mining is good enough for me," replied Greystone, boastingly.

"This is a capital cigar," remarked the other. "There is a great deal of money to be made out of coal in this section."

"The inhabitants don't seem to be making fortunes out of it," quoth Greystone.

"That is very true, sir, though there has been a round sum taken from those Alanson mines. Not as much now as formerly, however. The fact is, I called this evening for the very purpose of making an offer of a coal-mine myself, sir. Of course, if you do not wish to invest, I shall not press it. It is too good a thing to require pushing."

"You have a mine, too, then? Lockwood told me he had a monopoly."

"Well, he has, just at present," said the Judge; "but he won't have long. I tell you, sir, I have more coal right under my timberland than could be taken out of the Alanson mines in a thousand years."

"Why don't you dig it out?" asked the practical Californian.

The Judge finished a very long puff before he responded. Diplomacy suggested the wisdom of concealing the very stringent condition of his financial affairs. "Well, you see, I never have been much of a business man," he said, confidentially. "I had an idea the coal was there long before I found it, but I didn't need the money, sir, and, though I always intended mining it some day, I just kept putting it off and putting it off till the war came along. Well, sir, there wasn't much chance for coal-mining in Kentucky during the war. Since then—well, since then, I couldn't tell you just why I haven't run a shaft. Ready money is not quite as plenty with us as it used to be, and I've thought lately that I'd rather sell the property, or at least an interest in it."

"I shouldn't think you would want to give it up," said Greystone, questioningly.

"That is because you are young and I am getting old, sir. A man at sixty hasn't the energy and ambition of thirty; and, besides, I never had any business push. I realized my own deficiency in that regard by comparison with others. You remember the old saying

that we always desire most the unattainable. Well, sir, that is precisely my case. I don't know any trait that I admire more than energy. I congratulate you, sir, on yours. If you had my land—with the splendid energy, the ambition, the intellectual strength that have already won for you so much well-deserved success—you would open up a mine that would be coining money for you when the Alanson mines had fallen into decay."

"Judge Fitzhugh, you ought to work those mines yourself," said Greystone.

"Yes, I know I ought to," replied the unbusiness-like owner of those vast coal-fields, the character he had assumed emphasized by the enervation of his tone and manner. "I wish you'd come over and take a look at the field. What are you going to do to-morrow?"

"Nothing," replied Greystone, with an eagerness that did not pass unnoticed.

"Well, come over and take dinner with us, then. We dine at five."

"Thank you, I'll be on hand. Take another cigar. Put a handful in your pocket."

“Really, really, my dear sir!” expostulated the Judge.

“Oh! you needn’t be afraid of their running out. I’ve got lots more, and there ain’t a man about the place that don’t smoke at my expense. Why, I give ’em to the niggers. Good-night. I’ll be on hand to-morrow for dinner.”

Dull indeed must be the ear that is unsusceptible to flattery. In that flattering allusion to the young man’s energy and ambition the diplomate had executed a master stroke. You don’t believe in the potency of flattery? You don’t believe a strong man or a wise woman would be weak enough to yield to its influence? Try it, and you will see. Tell Miss Simper that she is beautiful; tell Miss Warble that there is more pathos in her voice than you have ever heard before; tell Miss Suffrage that you had thought until you met her that all women’s-rights women were old and homely. Tell Senator Prosy that the speech you heard him make changed your political faith; tell the Rev. Mr. Sopp that only his sermons turned you from the path of perdition. Only try it, I repeat, and you will see. Nay, look into your

own heart of hearts and see if your regard for Miss Taffy does not date from the day that she remarked your perfect manners and the intellectuality of your conversation; if you have not had a kindly feeling for Mr. Crocodile ever since he told your friend that your column was the best thing in the *Post*. Ah, well, there is one great compensation in it all, and that is that we seldom realize the flattery. Vanity of vanities, we silently flatter the flatterer in our improved opinion of his powers of appreciation and discernment.

When Judge Fitzhugh returned home he found the ladies on the veranda. "Well, Mr. Greystone will dine with us to-morrow," he said as he seated himself.

"You haven't really invited him to dinner, have you?" asked Mrs. Fitzhugh.

"I really have, my dear, and he accepted the invitation."

"Has he improved much? Is he at all refined?" asked Mrs. Fitzhugh.

"He has undoubtedly improved," replied her husband. "How much, I will allow you to judge for yourself. As to his refinement, I

suppose there are degrees of refinement. I didn't find him barefooted or ragged, and he wears a diamond stud that rivaled the combined brilliancy of the twelve lamps in his room. He considers illumination one of the special privileges of wealth, and I suppose by to-morrow night he will have an extra dozen lighted."

"How odd, papa!" exclaimed a musical voice.

"He has bought a dazzling red carpet for his room," continued the Judge, "and he treats everybody, including drummers and niggers, to twenty-five-cent cigars. He insisted on my carrying a dozen home with me. He is naturally well satisfied with himself, and might be worse; but, on the whole, I don't think I can say he is refined. It wouldn't surprise me very much to see him eat with his knife."

"Horrors!" ejaculated Mrs. Fitzhugh.

"Is he handsome, papa?" asked the musical voice.

"No, he is not."

"How does he look?"

"Well, he has straight sandy hair and a wiry, reddish mustache. He doesn't dress in

very good taste, and if he wanted to wear gloves I fear it would be necessary for him to have them made to order. He has an ugly gash across his face, too."

"Did he ask about me, papa, or say anything about having been here before?"

"No; I don't suppose he would enjoy a reference to those days, and I am quite sure, young lady, that he did not mention your name. He has probably forgotten you."

The young lady tapped the porch with as dainty a slipper as ever adorned an arched instep. "I don't think he has," she said.

Miss Tildah Fitzhugh, silent and ghastly-looking in the moonlight, laughed cunningly in her weird way. "He is very boorish, Martha. He is quite coarse-looking and homely, Genevieve, but he dines with us to-morrow. Tell me, Noel, do you think you can induce him to buy your old orchard?"

CHAPTER VII.

AN EARLY CALL.

WHEN Mr. John Greystone started out at two o'clock the next day for the Fitzhugh's, the indulgent reader, cognizant of all the expectations and hopes that had centered about that particular visit in the numerous day-dreams of the young man, may reasonably conjecture that he had forgotten that the dinner for which he had been invited had been set for five o'clock. But the members of that punctilious household, being all unaware of the state of their guest's mind—past and present—can scarcely be condemned even by the stanchest friends of my hero (if it be that he has won any) for a slight exhibition of annoyance at the earliness of his arrival. He had seen fit to be driven to the house in the most stylish turnout that could be procured for money at the livery stable, and the attention of Miss Genevieve in her room upstairs was attracted by the crunching sound of the wheels of the vehicle on the driveway. We will not dwell at length on the emo-

tions of the affluent young man who ascended firmly and confidently the steps where a ragged and barefooted stranger had partaken of a hastily prepared breakfast thirteen years before. Suffice it to say that ere he rang the bell he turned to look again upon the lawn and the gravel walk (not so well kept now) over which the outcast had dragged a lame foot and a weary body.

Miss Genevieve, who had glanced through the closed blind at the man below her, divined at once—from the hired vehicle and from the resemblance of its occupant to the description given by her father the evening before—that it was John Greystone; and that imperious young beauty, well aware of the earliness of the hour, formed her own opinion as to their visitor's ignorance in the ways of polite society. Besides, he was not handsome, one hasty glance assured her of that, not even as prepossessing in appearance as the image of the barefooted boy that had at times flitted through her memory. When Uncle Zekiel, with a low bow, opened the door, Mr. Greystone asked for Judge Fitzhugh, who, at that particular

instant, was rhetorically demonstrating the "iniquity of reconstruction, sir," in the office of his friend and comrade in arms, General Kenwood.

Having, therefore, been informed of the absence of the eloquent master of the house, Mr. Greystone, stating that he had an engagement to dine with him, and would wait until his arrival, was ushered into the library by Zekiel, after which the latter sought his mistress to inform her of "de gemman's pref'ence to wait for de Massa," whose hasty return, it is needless to say, Mrs. Fitzhugh sincerely desired. For the Judge, in a late council held the preceding night, had not failed to imbue her with the importance of engendering a friendly feeling between themselves and the man whose ample resources could alone loosen the grip of the odious Ryson. Indeed, the lady had at first thought of going downstairs and herself receiving the early guest, but in the hope that her husband would momentarily return (she had already sent a juvenile darky for him), and ignorant of the manner in which the plebeian animal in the library might have

welcomed such a courtesy, she contented herself by ordering the dinner to be prepared as quickly as possible, and impatiently awaited her husband's arrival. Fortunately, it was not long delayed, and a half hour had not elapsed ere the host, with urbane smile and extended hand, entered the room. "I am very glad that you came early," he said; "and I owe you an apology for not being at home. Business of an important nature, my dear sir" (the manner of the speaker could not have conveyed more importance had the business involved the actual release for all time of his own unfathomed coal-mines), "made my absence unavoidable. If it is perfectly agreeable to you, we will stroll over to the orchard and take a look at the mines. The ladies will be ready when we return, and will be delighted to see you." A shade of disappointment flitted across the face of the visitor, who, after coming three thousand miles to look upon the princess of the fairyland of youth, was, on his arrival at her abode, politely forced from the realm of enchantment and transported back to the realities of life in as short a time as the delib-

erate tones of the practical parent would allow.

So the two men traversed the distance between the house and the old orchard that the Judge (ever a flowery rhetorician) was pleased to call his mines. Southward of the timberland the ground rose abruptly, and several irregular and shallow excavations had been made in the side of the hill. Judge Fitzhugh enthusiastically exhibited choice specimens in the adjacent dumps, and expatiated at length upon the testimony of the experts who had unhesitatingly made affidavit, sir, that half the plantation was coal land. But John Greystone knew as little of coal-mining as he did of astronomy, geometry, social etiquette or any other abstruse science of which he knew nothing at all, and I have not a doubt that if the dumps had contained gold-bearing quartz, instead of coal, he would have risked all chance of ownership of such a mythical mine for a speedy transportation to the castle and a half hour's interview alone with its enchantress. Judge Fitzhugh did not fail to notice the apparent preoccupation of his guest's mind, and, ascrib-

ing it to his own hastiness in broaching business matters, dropped the subject, and shortly proposed a return to the house.

Whatever crude ideas the young millionaire had entertained of the result of that first meeting; whatever visions of a passionate declaration of the love that had grown and strengthened with every year, thriving on absence and obstacles till its tendrils had intertwined themselves with every fiber of his being; whatever intoxicating fancy of pleased surprise and returned affection, as the reward of his long devotion, had been cherished in his heart, were doomed to speedy disappointment. Mrs. and Miss Fitzhugh rose as he entered the parlor and were formally introduced by his host. The elder lady, after a hesitation so brief that it passed unnoticed, extended her hand, and Genevieve offered the same courtesy to their guest. During the moment that he held Genevieve's hand John Greystone felt his own tremble under the tension of his emotion, and she, meeting the glance of those gray eyes that sought and held her own, knew as well as woman ever knew that the man loved her. What need of

an awkward interview, of a torrent of words, of a declaration of passion, for that well-bred beauty? She would have known that light intuitively, even if she had not seen it in other eyes, and she had, often enough. There was another occupant of the room—"Mr. Sedgwick, allow me to introduce Mr. Greystone."

Arthur Sedgwick was a handsome man of thirty years or thereabout. He had light blue eyes, and a soft mustache shaded his lips, which parted continually in a smile that disclosed his glistening, pointed teeth. He was a man of independent but not large means, and as popular with the fair sex as he was unpopular with his own.

The two men shook hands, and Mr. Sedgwick expressed his delight at the acquaintance.

Although a frequent and welcome visitor at the house, he would not have been pressed to remain to dinner if he had declined the invitation necessarily extended to him. Though there was no better conversationalist of his years, and no man better posted on politics, Judge Fitzhugh would far rather have bowed him out at the front door than into the dining-room.

Though no member of the sterner sex could gossip more delightfully, Mrs. Fitzhugh would have bid him good-evening with pleasure. And even Miss Genevieve, whose music he had turned, whose escort he had been, whose whims he had humored a hundred times, whose devoted slave he had repeatedly declared himself, was wellnigh tempted imperiously (though covertly) to demand his instant departure. The truth was that the Fitzhughs, not knowing just how one of their guests would deport himself at the table, preferred to acquire that knowledge in the absence of the other. You may smile at such undue trepidation when the subject in hand was a millionaire, but you forget that Judge Fitzhugh had ridden the hobby of blood for sixty years; that his lady had stickled for refinement from the time she left off pinafores, and that the young beauty, who was the daughter of both, was as haughty as any heiress in the land. Well and good if the rich Northerner were taken up by the Kenwoods, the Mortimers, the Galbraiths, the Fenwicks and the scions of Southern aristocracy generally. But what if he were not? What if he should prove unpre-

sentable in the presence of the most inveterate gossip of his sex? It was too harrowing for thought. *Noblesse oblige!* and the upholder of family, the high priest of blood, the idolater of caste, was fain to accept the inevitable.

I have no doubt that if Mrs. Fitzhugh had left the arrangement of seats at the table to John Greystone, he would have occupied Mr. Sedgwick's place between that lady and her daughter. His seat was between the hostess and Aunt Tildah, who made her appearance, and to whom he was introduced, as they entered the dining-room. Much to Mrs. Fitzhugh's gratification, the gentleman at her left did not put his knife into his mouth or otherwise make himself disagreeably conspicuous. It is true that he used his knife with the fish, allowed the handle of that utensil and his fork to rest on the table, instead of on his plate, and carried his elbows at a horizontal position during the progress of the meal.

The affable gentleman at the foot of the table also noticed that the mastication of his food was audible at times, but these were all minor details that might have passed unnoticed in a less

punctilious household, and would have been, the world over, when the offender was a millionaire. The conversation was confined principally to topics of general interest, and latterly to the subject of gold-mining, one with which John Greystone was thoroughly familiar, and in which the two young gentlemen at the right and left of the Judge were deeply interested. In their young eyes Mr. Greystone was a hero indeed, and either one of them would have given all the Fitzhugh blood in his veins to have taken that overland trip to California, to have shot bears and fought Indians, and to have hobnobbed with real live scouts.

And so the dinner passed off pleasantly enough, more pleasantly to some of those present than they had dared to anticipate. After its conclusion they all sought the veranda, where the Judge offered his guests cigars. "The ladies don't object, you know," he said, as he offered his case to Mr. Greystone.

"No, I thank you, I'll smoke one of these," said that gentleman, taking one of the famous twenty-five centers from his pocket. "Judge, let me insist on your smoking one of mine.

There aren't any cigars like them in Florissant, I know." And the host was obliged to accept the inevitable. Naturally thinking that the cigars would in turn be pressed upon his other guest, he slipped his own case back into his pocket, but John Greystone had apparently exhausted his generosity that day, and had lighted his own cigar when Judge Fitzhugh noticed that Sedgwick was unprovided and hastily offered his case with an apology. Whether or not Mr. Sedgwick had noticed the slight could never have been guessed from his countenance, as blandly smiling as ever.

But where were the rosy-hued visions of that first meeting that had been cherished and dreamed of on the far-away banks of the Kabawara? Where are they, John Greystone? She is there before you, as beautiful as ever fancy painted her, and you are strong enough to throw that smiling Sedgwick over the railing. You have more money than her father ever had in the old days, too. Then, why do you sit chafing there between those two prosy old people, waiting for Sedgwick to go until that gentleman reminds Miss Gene-

vieve of their engagement to ride, and she excuses herself to don her habit?

She returned presently, looking handsomer than ever in the close-fitting riding-habit that displayed her perfect figure to such advantage, but he never noticed that. Sedgwick had, and half the beaux in the county had; so had Mrs. Fitzhugh, and Miss Genevieve herself had a full-length mirror in her room and knew well enough that she had a good figure. But in the eyes of John Greystone she would have been as fair in rags as in her dainty habit, and the love that followed her that summer evening as she rode gayly off with that erect, smiling man was as untarnished as the love that had led him across the plains to the gold-fields and three thousand miles back again to Florissant.

After all it was small wonder that he was dissatisfied, and he could not have concealed it if he had tried. I do not know what vague ideas flitted through the mind of Mrs. Fitzhugh—women guess a man's secret when the best friends of his own sex wouldn't think of it; but after he had gone, Judge Fitzhugh remarked

to his wife that he feared their guest had not enjoyed the evening.

"Probably he felt a little strange," said Mrs. Fitzhugh.

"That may be it," assented her husband; "but I thought he was a little put out by Genevieve's going."

"I don't see why he should be," said the mother.

"Well, neither do I, Martha; but, after all, it isn't as if he had come back to us an utter stranger. I think he would have appreciated a little more warmth on your part and on Genevieve's."

"He treated Mr. Sedgwick quite rudely about the cigars," said Mrs. Fitzhugh.

"Yes, he did," acknowledged the Judge. "And I really don't know whether it was through ignorance or intentional. Genevieve devoted her entire attention to Sedgwick, and the man's feelings were hurt. I could see it plainly enough when she rode away." The Judge spoke petulantly, for the day closed unsatisfactorily enough. Turning from his wife he saw two very black eyes fixed upon

him, and two thin blue lips asked, tauntingly, "Tell me, Noel, do you think you can induce him to buy your old orchard?"

CHAPTER VIII.

A SOCIAL LION.

WHATEVER had been the impression made on the different members of the Fitzhugh family by the third advent of John Greystone in that eminently refined household, that event was the signal for a general opening of doors throughout Florissant to the wealthy Northern stranger. Not that they would have remained closed eventually under any circumstances, for Gold is the most ingenious of locksmiths. In fine, does he not accomplish far more in that line than his much vaunted rival, Love? If there had been any wavering in the minds of the most unreconstructed rebels, if there had been any holding back on the part of skeptics or purblind idolaters of blood, there was only universal hospitality after the Fitzhughs had

taken the initiative. The numerous ex-military contingent "were most happy, sir, to be introduced to Mr. Greystone, sir." And the sincerity of their declarations was proven by the freedom with which they drank his wine and smoked his twenty-five cent cigars. Fortunately for the posterity of Southern families, the ex-military contingent (which comprised four-fifths of the adult male population) was possessed of mothers, wives, sisters and daughters, like any other mortals, and so it came to pass that John Greystone, being young and a bachelor and—but why should the motives of those gentle female relatives be impugned? Enough that Southern hospitality asserted itself in no uncertain terms, and he was invited everywhere. His manners were undeniably crude, and refinement did not scruple to gossip about him scandalously once his back was turned, but the welcome was none the less warm for that. His cigars were certainly famous, and there were any number of mortgaged acres for sale in Christian County; his vehicles were the very latest style, and there were any number of girls (not for sale, cer-

tainly) who liked very well to ride in them behind his swift trotters. And so the summer days passed into weeks, and John Greystone, a pleasant fellow withal—though a trifle given to boasting on the one subject of money—found himself quite a social lion. He might have married into any one of a score of first families for the asking, and if he hadn't been a very resolute lion indeed, pretty Mateel Poin-dexter would have clipped his claws to a certainty.

But our lion did not ask Mateel, and he did not ask a score of others, and, strangest of all, he did not ask Genevieve Fitzhugh. Just why, the lion couldn't have told you. She had treated him with marked friendliness ever since that first evening, and she went horseback riding with him as often as with all other admirers combined; she even sang for him the most beautiful music he had ever heard; but, for all that, he had never told her that he loved her—that is, in reality, for in fancy he had avowed his passion a thousand times. But so surely as he approached the subject, just so surely the skillful beauty changed it, and the man who

had come three thousand miles to tell her that he loved her passed a month in the same town without having accomplished that laudable object. Smile, if you will, but what plain man, bred in the wilderness beyond the ken of women, could have asked admittance to the temple of love when a woman inheriting every art of coquetry stood at the threshold, ever ready to turn him thence—now with the imperious introduction of an entirely foreign subject, demanding instant recognition and discussion; again with a light laugh, suggestive of ridicule, from which the veriest Romeo would have fled; and at times, if the devotee pressed too closely, any member of the fair enslaver's sex who was within hearing would be suddenly summoned to the scene, only to be asked, demurely, if it was true that she was going to spend the winter in Louisville, or, perhaps, as demurely incited to hear a charming story that Mr. Greystone was on the point of telling. Miles from home, in the absence of all auxiliaries, when the lion had drawn too near a dangerous subject, Miss Fitzhugh's horse had been seized with a sudden and unaccountable frenzy to wander into adja-

cent corn paths, jump fences, or race along the road, with the bit between his teeth, as the fair coquette—who knew very well that the bit must necessarily have been between those objects—seriously informed her escort, after one particularly narrow escape. Summer was the gay season then, as now, in Florissant, and Mr. Greystone found himself a favorite guest at numerous lemonade teas, lawn parties and picnics, where he was flattered and made much of by numerous young ladies who had conceived sudden admiration for sandy red mustaches and scarred faces, of which combined adornments John Greystone was the sole possessor.

If dancing was indulged in, as it frequently was, there were always certain young ladies who did not care for dancing, which was fortunate for the lion, who was not versed in that fine art.

It was on one of these festive occasions that he met pretty little Lucy Kent, whose father and elder brother had been killed at Shiloh, and whose means were as slender as her own little waist. Yet, though she invariably wore the same cheap muslin dress at all social events,

she did not set her cap at the lion and did not even flatter him as they promenaded together under the trees.

Finally they walked toward the house and seated themselves on the portico, where they had a splendid view of the dancers through the broad open windows. It was early, and the first waltz was then in progress. Presently young Alston Kenwood (*on dit* that he is partial to the pretty wearer of the muslin) presents himself and asks for the next dance.

"Thank you, but it is engaged," says Miss Lucy; and Mr. Kenwood, stroking that budding down on his upper lip, wanders off disconsolately and shortly consoles himself with Miss Madge Rowland, who generously promises him the boon that Miss Kent has refused. The next dance, which is a waltz, commences, but no partner presents himself for the fair hand of Miss Lucy. Couple after couple pass by the window and whirl on. Master Alston, who is a vigorous dancer, dashes by and casts a reproachful glance at the young lady on the veranda, a glance of which that kittenish young lady on his arm is happily unconscious. Miss

Lucy taps her dainty slipper impatiently, then starts unconsciously as Genevieve Fitzhugh, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, sweeps by the window in the arms of Arthur Sedgwick.

"They make a handsome couple, don't they?" remarks Mrs. Kenwood, who is one of the chaperones of the occasion, and who approaches the couple on the portico as Sedgwick and Genevieve appear at the window.

"Yes; I think Mr. Sedgwick is awfully good-looking," sighs Miss Lucy.

"Miss Genevieve is beautiful," says Mr. Greystone, in his turn.

"He is awfully popular with the girls," says Miss Lucy, with a furtive glance through the window.

"You had better take care, Lucy; he is a dreadful flirt," remarks the handsome matron, who had jilted a half dozen lovers before Lucy was born, and who had spent two gay seasons in Washington when her late father was in the United States Senate.

"Is it his flirting that makes him so popular with the ladies?" asks John Greystone, almost sneeringly.

"It may be," replies the matron. "I never knew a male flirt who wasn't popular with my sex, and generally unpopular with your own, Mr. Greystone. There are always young girls foolish enough to believe everything they say," with a solicitous glance at Lucy, whose mother had been a schoolmate of her own years before.

"Why do you mothers allow it?" asks Greystone, gravely. "Why do you invite them to your houses, and let them ride and drive and dance with your daughters?"

"Oh, we can't very well help it. Besides, any girl who is foolish enough to have her head turned by a flirt" (another solicitous glance at Lucy) "deserves it. But your own sex is no better, sir. Did you ever see a man who admired a girl because she was good alone? No, sir; the most popular girls are the ones who have the prettiest faces, dance the best, flatter the most and flirt the hardest."

"Just look at Genevieve Fitzhugh," interrupted Lucy, who had just caught another fleeting glimpse of that young lady and her partner; "she flirts with every man she sees and laughs at them behind their backs, and

she has more beaux than any other girl in Florissant."

"And Arthur Sedgwick seems to be the favorite," says Mrs. Kenwood. "I wonder if they will make a match of it?"

"No. He is not the least bit in love with her," says Miss Lucy, as authoritatively as though she was the keeper of Arthur Sedgwick's numerous secrets. "No, there is nothing in such a rumor."

"I should think not," growls Greystone. "As if Genevieve Fitzhugh would think of marrying a fellow of that stripe!"

"Well, well! there is no telling," laughs Mrs. Kenwood, and takes her departure as the music stops.

Again does Master Alston Kenwood present himself before Miss Lucy with an appeal for the pleasure of the next dance, and again that artless young lady informs him that it is engaged; so that Master Alston, who knows very well that she didn't dance either the polka or the waltz, concludes that the engagement is a myth, and that she is smitten with that common fellow Greystone, for whom he conceives

a cordial dislike and whom he intends to quarrel with at the earliest opportunity—for the pride of the Kenwoods is not yet twenty.

Presently the first notes of the quadrille are struck by the hostess herself from the keys of a piano, and the dancers hurry to their places. Among the first are Genevieve and Sedgwick, who station themselves right opposite the window. "Let us go away," says Lucy, petulantly. And her moody escort, nothing loath, stalks away with her under the trees, while a young gentleman, who has been told that she was engaged for that dance, scowls fiercely after them and wonders who will act as the villain's second in the event of a "meeting" between them.

"Do you think that a man tires of a woman when he finds out that she really loves him?" asks Lucy.

"I don't know; I shouldn't think so," replies her escort, wondering if it would be possible for him to love a certain enchantress any less if he should become aware that his passion for her was returned.

And when Mr. Arthur Sedgwick approaches

with the eternal smile on his face and the sincere announcement that he had been looking all over for her and hadn't enjoyed himself at all, because she failed to keep the engagement for that dance, pretty Lucy's face lights up immediately, and her upbraiding is confined to the faltering announcement that she had said she would wait on the veranda. Of course Mr. Sedgwick had misunderstood her, and was awfully sorry, and hoped she hadn't been bored to death by that miner fellow. Of course she forgave him—she had done that the instant he approached, and now that the beauty had taken her departure, she had him pretty much to herself, and danced the last waltz in his arms about the time that the miner finished his last cigar at the hotel. As for that gentleman, he passed a sleepless night, and resolved more firmly than ever before to propose to Genevieve Fitzhugh on the morrow, even though he had to do it before all Florissant. And at the same hour in Genevieve's own room an interview was taking place that made the proposal very simple and easy, as the reader will learn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

A MOTHER'S APPEAL.

"WAS Mr. Greystone invited to the party this evening, Martha?" asked Judge Fitzhugh shortly after the departure of his daughter for the social event which has just been recorded.

"Yes; I don't know any place where he is not invited," Mrs. Fitzhugh replied, in a slightly injured tone.

"How is it that he did not take Genevieve, then," inquired the Judge.

"How is it? Why, Mr. Poindexter asked her first, and she accepted his invitation."

"Ah!" assented the Judge.

"I can't say that I am sorry Mr. Greystone was disappointed," resumed the lady. "Half of the girls in town have tried to capture him, and it is just as well for him to know that Genevieve Fitzhugh is not one of them. I do believe he thinks he is too good for most of the girls."

"Do you think he—he cares anything about Genevieve?" asked the Judge.

"I know it," replied the lady, decidedly. "He has been trying to propose to her ever since he has been here."

"Trying to?" echoed her husband, interrogatively.

"Yes, trying to. He is naturally awkward, and Genevieve has not given him an opportunity. I'm perfectly sure that when she called me out here yesterday to fix a rose in her hair, John Greystone was on the point of a proposal. He looked it, if ever a man did."

Judge Fitzhugh rose from his chair and began pacing nervously up and down the veranda, followed by his wife's furtive glances.

"What is the matter, Noel?" she asked, at last.

"Oh, nothing! nothing!" was all the reply vouchsafed, yet the frown deepened on his brow.

"There is something the matter, Noel; I know there is," persisted Mrs. Fitzhugh. "There hasn't been any more trouble about the mortgage, has there?"

Her husband started nervously. "About the mortgage? Certainly not," he said "There

is trouble enough in the fact of its existence. Trouble enough to turn us out on the road yonder in another six weeks."

"Wouldn't the sale give us something of a balance over the mortgage?"

"No. Who is there to bid on the place? Ryson will bid it in himself for the principal and interest."

"And the coal land?" suggested the lady.

"He will get the full benefit of that. I can't do anything with it now. I had hoped to get an offer from Greystone, but he has lost interest in it, somehow. I think Genevieve's treatment has had its effect on him."

"Does he know how much you need the money?"

"No, he does not," said Judge Fitzhugh. "He would not be any more likely to buy it if he did know, and if he should suddenly take a notion to it, the knowledge that I am a beggar would certainly not improve his offer."

"Don't you think it would have been better to have told him just how you were situated and to have relied on his generosity?"

"Oh, yes, with Genevieve treating him like

a schoolboy," said Judge Fitzhugh, sarcastically. "It is probable that he would have been generous under the circumstances. Very probable."

A brief silence ensued. Old Don, aged and decrepit, dragged himself to his master's feet and looked up into the troubled face with dumb sympathy. And sorely troubled in very truth was the master, as his eye wandered over the Fitzhugh acres—so broad, so fertile, so heavily burdened. Suddenly he turned and faced his wife. "I don't think, Martha, that you understand how deeply I am involved," he said. "God knows I haven't worried you about it unnecessarily; but now I don't know where to turn; I am worse than beggared."

Mrs. Fitzhugh left her chair and went up to her husband where he was leaning dejectedly against the vine-clad railing. "Not worse than beggared, Noel," she said. "Your honor is unstained, you will owe no man a dollar, and you still have your practice. We can't help making a living, after all."

"There is something else besides the mortgage," said the Judge, lowering his voice. "I

cannot tell you the particulars, but there are other obligations that I must meet, obligations in which my honor is involved. If this house is ever put up for sale I am a ruined man. I couldn't stand the disgrace, Martha, I couldn't stand it." And the husky tones ended in a dry sob.

Not even her woman's curiosity coveted the "particulars" of those "other obligations." "Business" had always been a mystery to her, but that it could in any way connect disgrace with the name of Fitzhugh was indeed beyond her comprehension. She drew closer to the despondent man, and laid one hand tenderly on his arm. "Don't give up, Noel," she said. "Isn't there anything left untried?"

"Yes," he answered. "There is only one thing that can save us—Genevieve's marriage to Greystone."

"Noel!" exclaimed his wife, shrinking from his side.

"That's right; blame me. I expected it," he replied, bitterly. "What did you ask me for, if you didn't want to know? Why shouldn't the girl marry Greystone? He won't help me

without her, and I must have money. He loves her and will make her a good husband, and it will save the family from disgrace. I don't think only of myself. There are the boys and the Fitzhugh name. She must marry him."

"Suppose, Noel, that she refuses?"

"She will not refuse. She cannot refuse. Tell her everything. You can influence her, Martha; I can't go to her. You will tell her to-night, won't you?"

"Yes, to-night," answered his wife. And then there was silence between them.

"The marriage won't be a bad thing for Genevieve, Martha," said the Judge at last.

"The power of money is greater than it was, and he is a millionaire. She will have everything a woman could wish for, and it will be the making of our boys. Our interests will be his, and you may be sure a practical man like Greystone won't neglect the coal-mines. We won't have to sacrifice what's left of the home, and the Fitzhughs can hold their heads as high as they ever did." The animation of other days returned to the speaker, but only momentarily, for in the next instant he asked, anx-

iously, "You don't think, Martha, that Genevieve will refuse when she understands?"

"No, she will not refuse. She will be engaged to marry John Greystone before the end of this week," answered Mrs. Fitzhugh.

Genevieve had just thrown aside her wrap and was standing before her mirror, when there was a light knock on her door.

"May I come in, dear?" asked Mrs. Fitzhugh.

"Yes, mamma," replied Genevieve, a little surprised at the late visit.

"Have you had a pleasant time?" asked the mother, sitting down on the side of the bed.

"Oh, yes," replied the young lady, disposing her graceful form among the cushions of an easy-chair. "I had to refuse a dozen invitations to dance, as usual."

"Who were there? Any married ladies?" asked Mrs. Fitzhugh.

"About the same people. There were not many chaperones—Mrs. Poindexter and Mrs. Dabney and Mrs. Preston. Mrs. Kenwood was there, too, and wore that lovely pearl necklace.

I don't think any of the young people in town were left out in the invitations—certainly none of the girls were. Lucy Kent was as devoted as usual to Arthur Sedgwick, who, of course, was devoted to me. He's awfully handsome and does dance divinely, but it is a shame the way he is flirting with that little goose. I just wish I could be in her place for twenty-four hours, and I'd lead him a dance that he wouldn't forget. Mr. Millionaire, who doesn't dance, looked quite gloomy, and was pleased to take umbrage at Arthur's attentions to Miss Fitzhugh."

"How do you know?" asked the older lady.

"Well, I flatter myself that he did. He spent an hour with Lucy on the veranda. Wouldn't it be a splendid thing, mamma, if he should fall in love with her—only I know he won't, and, even if he did, he wouldn't have the least chance as long as Arthur Sedgwick chose to flirt with her."

Suddenly Genevieve noticed the unwonted grave expression on her mother's face, and paused in her recital of those countless trifles that excite the feminine interest in a party.

"You're not a bit interested in what I am saying, mamma," she pouted, if the faintest compression of rosy lips can be so called.

"Yes, dear, I am, but—" Mrs. Fitzhugh hesitated.

"But what, mamma?" asked Genevieve.

"I had come in to-night to talk with you about a very serious matter, Genevieve. Your father is dreadfully worried about his business affairs, which are in a deplorable condition."

"I know, mamma, but we can't do anything. Poor papa! I think he worries too much. It's all on account of that horrid mortgage. Will he have to give up the house?"

"Yes, he says that he will, and I don't think you can understand how attached he is to it. Genevieve, tell me whether you care anything about Arthur Sedgwick?"

"As if that had anything to do with the mortgage!" exclaimed Genevieve, astonished at the suddenness of the question.

"But do you?" her mother persisted, with strange seriousness.

"No, I do not," replied the beauty, reflectively. "I like him as well as any man I

know, possibly a little better. He's awfully handsome, and dances well, and always does the right thing in the right place. I think he is the most refined man I know—and I am almost as bad as papa is about refinement, you know. But I wouldn't marry him. I don't care for him in that way."

"Thank God that you don't!" exclaimed Mrs. Fitzhugh, so earnestly that her daughter could only cry, "Why, mamma, what do you mean?"

"I don't know how to tell you, dear, but I must some way. Your father and I want you to marry some one else. Wait till I finish, dear. He is more deeply involved than I had thought, so deeply that he says the sale of the house is as nothing compared to the other troubles. He has contracted obligations of honor, and, if they are not paid, he will be disgraced. He says that he could never hold his head up again, and I know that it would kill him. There is only one man who has the power to help him, and that is John Greystone. He wants—we both want you to marry him, Genevieve."

The young girl stood up, erect, defiant, beautiful, and the mother's head drooped beneath her glance. "I don't understand you, mamma. I don't want to marry John Greystone. He is too common—he is too far beneath me. How could papa be disgraced by being poor? Oh, mamma, now you're crying. What have I said to hurt you?" And she threw her arms about the sobbing woman. "Tell me all about it so that I can understand. I will do anything for your sake and for papa's," she said, impulsively.

"There is nothing more to tell. I don't understand it myself. But it will disgrace your father, it will disgrace our boys, it will disgrace us all, if you don't marry Mr. Greystone. Your father told me to tell you that he would come to you on his knees, if you asked it. Oh, Genevieve, don't be hard on him; he is so broken—he has suffered so much. Don't humiliate him by forcing him to beg you or to tell you the particulars that he has even kept from me. Think of that gray head, my daughter; think of your brothers and their future; think of poor Til-

dah thrown on the world. You don't love any other man or I would not ask the sacrifice. Mr. Greystone loves you and will make you happy. He will give you everything in the world, and you will learn to love him in time. We are both women, my child, and we are Fitzhughs. We cannot weigh the cost of sacrifice when duty calls. The honor of the family—your father's life depends on you. Do you think I would ask you to marry him if it were not your duty? Tell me that you will, Genevieve. Let me bring that answer to your father, my child."

Genevieve did not reply at once to her mother's appeal. She left her side and walked rapidly about the room, like a beautiful caged animal that contemplates escape. She stopped before a portrait of one whom as a little child she had worshiped more than father or mother, and looked upon it long and earnestly, then turned suddenly toward Mrs. Fitzhugh, with trembling lips and moist eyes:

"Mamma, do you think that brother Guy would have wished it? I told him once, that time before he went away, that if he never

came back, and that if I was ever sorely troubled, if I wavered between right and wrong, I would do what I thought he would have wished. Do you think he would wish it, mamma?"

"Yes, my child, yes," said the stricken mother, between bitter sobs.

"Then I will do it," said Genevieve, firmly. "Tell papa that I have promised you. And now, mamma, good-night. Please go away. I want to be alone."

CHAPTER X.

THE CLOCK TALKS AGAIN.

THE next afternoon was spent very pleasantly by John Greystone at the Fitzhugh's—very pleasantly, even though he did not see Genevieve, that young lady, as he was informed by his hostess, having gone to spend two or three days with Mrs. Kenwood.

Genevieve had announced her intention early that morning—had insisted, nervously, that she must go. It would be only for a few days,

she said, and there would be time enough afterward for—she did not say what, but the mother, who had heard far into the sleepless night and into the gray dawn the sound of restless footsteps in her daughter's room; who had asked her own heart again and again in the silence of the night what Guy would have wished—the mother understood her daughter's longing to be alone in those first hours, to reconcile herself to the step that she had taken, away from those who had demanded the sacrifice, away for the present, at least, from the man whom she was to marry. So Mrs. Fitzhugh had kissed her good-by with assumed cheerfulness, and, after she had gone, made light of her short absence to Judge Fitzhugh, who had missed her at breakfast and was fretted at her departure. How could he understand the fullness of the sacrifice that she had made? Why should he? His wife, who had brought him Genevieve's promise, spared him the knowledge of nearly all that had passed between them, and readily coincided with the worldly views that he expressed regarding Genevieve's happiness in the wealthy match that they had arranged.

And yet it is one of the pleasantest afternoons that John Greystone has ever passed beneath that roof. How could it be otherwise when Mrs. Fitzhugh, always so uncomfortably reserved, makes him take the chair nearest her own, so that she can tell him how she herself had insisted on Genevieve's visit to Mrs. Kenwood because the poor child had been less well than usual lately, and she thought the change would benefit her; and then (in a lower voice) how Genevieve had said that all the pleasure of the visit would not compensate her for the loss of her expected ride with Mr. Greystone. "If you knew how seldom Genevieve says anything of the kind about gentlemen you would appreciate the compliment," the lady concludes, just as if her listener did not already appreciate it beyond all tangible valuation. All the tact that woman can command is exerted by Mrs. Fitzhugh to make amends for the absence of Genevieve, and the man who has asked so little at their hands is quickly appreciative, and for the first time feels at home among them. Only Aunt Tildah's eyes disturb him, and he can almost fancy that he again hears her repeating

mirthlessly, as she had repeated in the long ago, "What a joke! what a joke! what a joke!" But after dinner (Judge and Mrs. Fitzhugh would not hear of his leaving before) the pale face becomes indistinct in the deepening twilight, and to him come gentler thoughts of other days when he knew only kindness from every member of this household.

Ever since his return the subject of those early days had been tacitly avoided between them. The Fitzhughs had felt that it would be an embarrassing one for him, and had carefully avoided it, and he had not hitherto broached it, but on this evening, when in the twilight the homestead seemed to breathe a welcome once more, when even his hostess became the gentle Mrs. Fitzhugh of old, he gave language to the long unuttered thoughts and spoke of those other days. He told them something of the crudeness of his ideas at that time, and the boys (Ravenel and Leonard Fitzhugh) laughed at that portion of the recital wherein he confessed his inability to understand why the gentlemen of the family never wore their hats in the house. They were deeply interested

in his homely description of Egypt and of his flight from that dark land. "And do you know that the best meal I ever ate in my life, Mrs. Fitzhugh, was the one that Gen—Miss Genevieve gave me on these steps. I have never been so hungry before or since," he said; "though I have gone short of a feed now and then in the diggin's."

"Whatever made you leave us so suddenly?" asked the host.

"Well, sir, you did yourself."

"I?" said the Judge, slightly alarmed.

"Yes, sir; I will tell you how. You remember one night when Major and Mrs. Kenwood were here, the night before I went, and you told about how two young men had gone from these parts out to the coast, and how they had made their pile and had come back, and how one of them—" He stopped abruptly, but his color was unnoticed in the gathering twilight.

"Well, sir, that settled it. I made up my mind that night that I would start for the gold-fields, and I did, long before a soul in the house was stirring. I was pretty well played out after the first half mile, I can tell you, but I struck a

'mover's' wagon then, and just tumbled into the straw at the back of it and stayed there till night. The old man himself didn't know I was there till pretty near the end of the day, when we'd gone over thirty miles."

"Well ! well !" exclaimed Judge Fitzhugh. "That is the reason we couldn't find him, Martha."

"Did you hunt for me? Did you want to find me again?" asked Greystone, eagerly.

"Indeed we did. We rode the country over for ten miles around here, and I remember Guy—you remember my son, Mr. Greystone—I remember Guy telling me that he had questioned a mover about you some distance from here. I suppose you were sound asleep in that very man's wagon at the time."

"I reckon I was," John assented, and continued the recital of his adventures. He told them of the long, hard pilgrimage over the desert and of his early experiences in San Francisco; of his work in the gold-fields, the different classes of men he had been brought in contact with there, and of the long nights around the camp-fire. He told them how the great

craving for gold never left him through all the years, and that he was always sure that he would strike it. But he did not tell them why he first longed for the yellow metal; why all labor seemed light in the hope of its possession, or the source whence as a boy he had drawn his wondrous steadiness of resolve. He did not tell them of the constant image of a fair-haired child that had been with him always. That story was for her to hear—only for her.

Mr. John Greystone appeared to advantage on that pleasant evening. Not only were the boys deeply interested, but even Judge and Mrs. Fitzhugh drew their chairs nearer, and the former actually allowed one of those famous twenty-five-cent cigars to go out. Aunt Tildah sat with her face turned from her brother, and never uttered a word, and in the moonlight John Greystone could see the haunting eyes turned upon him almost pityingly. Once, as he paused, the younger of the boys asked him, with the *naivete* of ten, if he had ever saved any man's life.

"Yes, once, Leonard," he answered, gravely; "the life of my best friend, a man to whom I

owe everything; the truest, bravest man I ever knew—Alfred West.” With that dear name yet lingering on his lips, he saw Aunt Tildah rise nervously from her chair and fiercely strike her brow with clinched hand. Before any one could reach her she had fallen heavily to the floor in convulsions.

Long after John Greystone had dropped to sleep that night, his waking thoughts of a certain stately beauty having passed into dreams, wherein a young outcast and a fair-haired child roamed over Nodland picking golden berries; long after Judge and Mrs. Fitzhugh had exhausted the topic of their prospective son-in-law, and the lady, yielding to the superior judgment of her spouse, had consented to drive over with him to Mrs. Kenwood’s on the morrow and see if the bait could not be reconciled to a more speedy casting at the gold-fish; long after every other occupant of the house was in the same kind land where Greystone wandered, Tildah Fitzhugh, weak and exhausted, lay with sleepless eyes in the dreariest room in

the house. What bitter memories had been awakened, what unhealed wounds had been torn afresh by the utterance of *that* name by the stranger! What mattered the years that had passed to the lonely woman? The years had been so empty that the betrothal seemed but as yesterday, and the impotent sorrow was as poignant now as then. The hatred of her brother burned as fiercely now as in the hour that he told her Alfred West had gone away. She hated Mrs. Fitzhugh because she had known of his going and had not told her, and because she was Noel's wife; she hated Genevieve because of her youth and beauty; she hated the boys because Noel's blood flowed in their veins. She clinched her thin hands and bit her bruised lip when she thought how she hated them all. She had never cared for John Greystone before that night—whom had she cared for in all those years?—but now she would have laid down her wretched life for him, for Alfred West's best friend, for the man who had saved his life. How glad she was that she had known it in time. How duped and be-

littled and ruined the proud Fitzhughs would be when John Greystone knew all that the black clock had told her. And to save him, to save him for Alfred West's sake! "Do it—do it—do it," the clock ticked in the darkness, and all through the night and into the morning. Those were the only words it uttered—a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand times it spoke them with unvarying monotony, but the dreary woman in the dreary room never tired of hearing them.

CHAPTER XI.

DEAD SEA FRUIT.

VERY buoyant, very happy, very well satisfied with the world in general, and himself in particular, felt John Greystone, Esquire, when he awakened the next morning. Glorious shone the sun and fair seemed the dull little city in the eyes of that young capitalist. Why shouldn't he be happy? Had not her mother as good as told him that Genevieve's

heart was in his keeping. Oh, what a tender master he would be!—How he would plant her path with amaranth flowers!

He sang like a school-boy that morning as he dressed himself. He tipped Sambo so handsomely for polishing his boots that that sable freeman was actually light-headed as long as the money lasted, and followed him about town for the sole purpose of baring his woolly head to his benefactor at frequent intervals, thereby causing no small amount of astonishment on the part of the latter. Sambo informed at least a dozen new-made citizens of his own complexion that “in cou’sè Mister Linkum was de greatest man an’ Mister George Washin’ton was de nex’, but after dem two, suh, dis niggah reckons General Greystone am ’bout de nex’ greates’ in de lan’.”

The next greatest man treated everybody about the City Hotel to champagne, and as for cigars, the number that he distributed was marvelous. Yet, in the midst of his great happiness, there was a feeling of restlessness that grew with a rapidity akin to

that of the bean-stalk of child-lore, and that finally culminated in a resolve to drive to Mrs. Kenwood's and see Genevieve that very hour. And it was in the very moment of this resolve that a disreputable-looking little negro presented himself with a note addressed to "Mr. Jno. Greystone." The messenger did not belong to the Fitzhugh place, but the handwriting was that of a woman, and he tore the envelope open with nervous haste to discover the following brief epistle, written in a straggling, childish hand:

"Dear Mr. Greystone:

"Will you please call at the house this afternoon?"

"Yours respy.,

"MATILDA FITZHUGH."

Though the brief note was an enigma to him, you may be sure that he did not take long to answer the summons, and the span of horses that he had already ordered for the drive to Mrs. Kenwood's was soon scattering the gravel on the carriage-drive in front of the big brick house.

Miss Tildah Fitzhugh was apparently await-

ing his arrival, and came toward him with one thin hand extended as he ascended the steps. Her unusual pallor, her nervous trembling, and the dark circles under the eyes, reminded him unpleasantly of her sudden attack, which had terminated his visit so suddenly the evening before. He wondered more and more what it all meant, as, the first formal greeting over, he obeyed the motion of the thin hand, and took the proffered seat near her own. John Greystone had never been distinguished for any particular ease of manner, and, as he sat there under the tense scrutiny of Aunt Tildah's gleaming eyes, he grew absolutely uncomfortable. If she could only have dared to speak to him of Alfred West! Once, after a hasty and suspicious glance at the door and windows, she bent toward him, and it seemed as though she must speak of him; but, if her lips moved, it was with no audible sound, and the struggle passed.

Finally John Greystone said: "I received your note, Miss Fitzhugh."

"Did it surprise you?" asked the lady.

"Well, yes, it did," he replied, frankly.

"Did you think Genevieve had come home?"

"I didn't know just what to think. I came as quickly as I could," he answered.

"Genevieve will be here this evening," said Aunt Tildah, who could not fail to notice the unconcealed pleasure with which he received the information.

"Will she?" eagerly. "Thank you very much for letting me know. But—I understood Mrs. Fitzhugh to say that she would be gone for two or three days."

"Yes, she expected to be away that long. She would like to stay away two or three years, I think; but after you went away last night Noel grew very anxious to have her home to-day, and persuaded Martha to drive over for her this morning. They will be sure to bring her back with them. Oh! very sure."

"I am glad to hear that Miss Genevieve is coming home so soon," he said, earnestly.

"Yes, they thought you would be—that is the reason they went for her," she returned, coolly.

"Thought I would be glad?" he repeated, incredulously. "You don't mean to tell me

that Miss Genevieve is coming back to-day just to please me?"

The pale lips quivered for a moment, and Greystone heard again the weird, mirthless laugh that had startled him as a boy thirteen years before. "That is what I mean to say. They are going to bring her home to please you," she said. "Noel is naturally so kind, and then you can't imagine how anxious they are here for your pleasure. Why, if she had gone to the other end of the world they would bring her back to you if they thought it would please you."

Greystone looked about him anxiously. He recalled the suddenness of the woman's attack on the evening before, and he wondered why she had been left alone in the state in which he found her. Then the humiliating thought occurred to him that this keen-tongued lady was amusing herself by making him the butt of her sarcasm.

"I must say that I don't understand you, Miss Fitzhugh," he said, with some show of resentment.

"No? You never will, either; but you'll

understand Noel and Martha and Genevieve before you leave this porch," she said, fiercely. "What would you say if I told you that Genevieve doesn't love you any more than she loves the dust under her feet? That Martha despises you and laughs at you behind your back, because you are common? That Noel is using you, because he is on the verge of financial ruin, and unless you give him money he will be disgraced?"

She waited for his answer. There was a sterner glitter in the gray eyes and harder lines in the rugged face as he said: "Don't ask me questions, woman, and don't talk in conundrums. Say your say and stick to the truth, for you'll have to prove every word of it."

She laughed again, weirdly, mirthlessly, at the threat, and then, out there in the glorious sunshine, on that broad veranda where the child had given food to the outcast, she brought forth the last skeleton of the Fitzhugh house and blasted John Greystone's life. "I don't suppose Noel told you that he didn't have a dollar in the world when he tried to

sell you that worthless coal land. Anyhow, he didn't have, and the house and land will be sold under the hammer when the interest on the mortgage falls due in October. But that isn't the worst of it—almost a year ago, when he was speculating in oil, he went to Arthur Sedgwick and borrowed five thousand dollars from him on his note secured by the house already mortgaged to its full value. Sedgwick had no idea of this, and was in love with Genevieve, and not only loaned him the money, but promised to keep it a secret. Noel gambled the money away in a week, and now the note will be due in a few days, and in a few days more the place will be sold, and Sedgwick, who is far from rich, will see that he has been humbugged. After that Noel couldn't live in Kentucky or any other Southern State. He'll kill himself before the day of the sale. When you came he tried to sell you the land because it would have saved him. He found you didn't want the old land and that you did want Genevieve, and so he made up his mind to sell you the girl instead of the land. He took it for

granted that as Genevieve's husband you would not refuse him what money he needed. He had a hard time winning Mrs. Fitzhugh over, for you were so dreadfully common that at first she wouldn't hear of having you in the family under any circumstances. But he won her over and made her talk Genevieve into it. That was the hardest struggle of all, and the girl came mighty near balking the whole scheme. But her mother talked about duty and went on till she gave in at last."

"She did make an appeal, though!" exclaimed Greystone, clinging with the supreme faith of love to that one frail hope.

"Oh! yes, she made an appeal and fought hard against it, but it was with no thought of you," said the woman, contemptuously. "She fought against it for her own sake, because she said you were too common, too far beneath her. She sacrificed you without a thought of your happiness when it was made clear to her that the family honor, the boys' future, her father's life, everything dear to her, depended on the marriage. She con-

sented then, but couldn't bear the sight of you all at once, and ran away to avoid you. And they thought I didn't know about their schemes—just as if I couldn't listen without being seen—just as if the clock couldn't talk. What a joke! What a joke! What a joke!”

She had expected an outburst of anger from her listener, but he did not utter a word. She knew that he had been deeply moved, for the man's changed demeanor was as expressive as any words could have been, and his suffering was visible in the contracted brow, the harshly compressed lip and the fiercely clinched hand.

“You haven't asked me to prove what I said. Do you believe it?” she asked.

“Every word,” he answered, between his set teeth.

“Are you going to tell Noel that I told you?”

“No,” he replied.

“I am glad of that. I would rather he wouldn't know it. But I'm not afraid of him—I despise him too much for that. I hate him, John Greystone, but I have not told you all this because of my hatred. I have told you for your own sake, because

I—I like you more than anybody else, and I wanted to save you. You don't deserve to suffer, and he does—I wouldn't see you sacrificed for his convenience." The words of the woman were so tenderly spoken that he looked up, wonderingly.

"I don't want you to think badly of me," she continued, entreatingly. "I'd rather anybody else would do that. I want you to believe that I told you for your own sake."

"Thank you," he said, simply. And as he rose to go he took the hand extended toward him.

He drove slowly through the gate that old Zekiel held open for him, and paused irresolutely in the middle of the road. Then Aunt Tildah, watching him from the house, saw him turn the horses to the left toward the road leading out of town.

He let them jog along at their own gait, and gave himself up to bitter thought.

And it was for this humiliation that he had toiled all those years; for this that he had worshiped with unswerving faith the goddess of Love in the image of a child; it was

this woman whom he had worked for and loved and thought of day and night; this woman—whom his boyhood, aye, his manhood, had trusted infinitely, without reason, as naturally as he drew the breath of life—who had despised him at last, and had bargained for his hand for the sake of her people, as heedless of his feelings as she would have been of those of any negro slave whose sale might have been to the interest of the Fitzhugh family.

For the first time he knew the emptiness of his wealth; for the first time he sounded the depths of human misery. The world seemed changed and laboring in a thralldom of hypocrisy.

Slowly ascending a hill, he overtook an old negro who seemed to walk with difficulty and leaned at times upon the sturdier arm of a negress who accompanied him. He drew rein and asked the man where he was going.

“I’s walkin’, massa,” replied the man, removing his hat with that respect for the superior race inherent in all old house-slaves. John Greystone knew what the term meant—that the man had been turned away from his master’s plantation.

“What are you walking for?” he asked.

“It’s about one ob dese here pensions, massa,” the man replied. “My boy fought

for Mister Linkum an' freedom, an' he got hit wid a shell dat gib him a pow'ful misery in his side, an' he done 'plied fur pension. Major Kenwood was mighty mad when he heard it, an' sez he hab'n' got no use fur pension niggahs; an' he tole me to get out ob de cabin and neber show myself roun' dere no mo'—an' so I's walkin', massa."

The old man looked weary enough, but remained standing, respectfully.

"Where are you going now?" asked Greystone.

"Dunno where I's goin'. Major Kenwood owned me since I was a boy. I's in de good Lawd's han's now. Nobody wants two po' ole niggahs!"

"Did Major Kenwood order you off, too?" asked John, turning to the old woman.

"No, suh," answered the woman. "De missis said I could stay, but I's been wid Israal for forty year an' I's walkin' whereber he goes. Bressed be de Lawd for dat!"

John Greystone brought his whip down heavily, and the startled horses dashed up the hill. At another time he would have given the old couple more money than they had ever seen, but not now. What was this black man that he had won what all John Greystone's money could not buy?

A mile further on he turned his horses from

the road and forced his way for a short distance along the side of a stream that intersected the road. When he could progress no further with the vehicle, he left it and proceeded afoot through the underbrush, looking carefully about him as if for dimly remembered landmarks. When he stopped at last, it was with difficulty that he remembered the spot where he had rested as an outcast, and had buried the token of his boyish humiliation. The dell was much changed, for a regiment had bivouacked there, and the ground was still littered with remnants of battered camping utensils. He glanced furtively about at the foot of a huge tree whose bare limbs were as devoid of life as was his own heart of hope. He kicked aside two or three heaps of rubbish and turned over a dark piece of leather that proved to be the decayed remains of a knapsack. Bah! John Greystone, as well search in your own warped nature for the love that you buried there thirteen years ago.

CHAPTER XII.

A FAIR MAID'S IDEAL.

IF John Greystone had entertained the slightest doubt as to the truth of Aunt Tildah's dis-

closure, it would have disappeared after his visit to the Fitzhughs the next day. If he had only remained ignorant he would have been the happiest of men, for never before had he been the recipient of so much kind attention from Genevieve. He found himself in close proximity to her at all times, and the very awkwardness that had weighed upon him before seemed to have disappeared beneath the amiability of her presence. She sang for him as she had never sung before, choosing his favorite songs with naive simplicity. At an early hour, Judge Fitzhugh recalled the imperative nature of some unfinished work in the library, and Mrs. Fitzhugh, pleading a headache, retired shortly after, leaving Genevieve alone with her guest. Alone for two hours in the moonlight with a man whose love for herself had never been concealed, and yet unable to win a proposal from him. She did not deem it necessary to make any effort at first, for surely a man who had tried to propose to her a half dozen times in as many weeks would not need encouragement under the circumstances. But the man was apparently oblivious of his opportunity, and, though she did not remember that he had ever before appeared quite so much at his ease, his conversation drifted further and further from any subject of a tender nature.

Accomplished flirt as she was, Genevieve was for the first time aware that she did not thoroughly understand the commonplace man at her side, and, though she could not have told why, felt a vague uneasiness of being under inspection. At last she spoke of Sedgwick, for she felt confident that Greystone was jealous of him. "Do you know I have not seen him to-day," she said.

"Does he come every day?" asked John.

"No; but I had half expected he would be here to welcome me home."

"Would you care much, one way or the other, whether you saw him or not?" he asked, bending toward her slightly.

She laughed so that her eyes sparkled and her teeth glistened in the moonlight.

"What a question!" she exclaimed. "Yes, of course I would care. He is very appreciative, and always devoted, and girls like devotion, you know. There are others I would miss more, though."

"Do you really mean that?" he questioned, earnestly.

"Yes," she answered.

"I have thought sometimes that you cared for him."

"The idea! I could never look up to him. He has accomplished nothing and never will

accomplish anything. I have always liked him well enough, but he is not my ideal of a man."

"And what is your ideal, Miss Genevieve?"

"I have never told it to any one before. My ideal man must have great strength of character and self-independence. It wouldn't matter whether his father was a prince or a plowman, but he must be brave and manly."

"Is that all?" he asked.

"Not quite. He must be generous, and he must love me better than all the world beside." There was an appeal in the soft voice, there was witchery in every curve of the fair form, yet John Greystone only said lightly, "The last requirement is too easy, Miss Genevieve; it would not require an ideal man to comply with it. I wish you would sing one more song for me before I go." She went into the parlor and sang the words of one of his favorite songs—a simple ballad, which drifted out to him in her rich contralto voice. Yet his face only hardened while he listened, and if there was the faintest lingering pressure of her hand when they parted a half hour later, he did not return it.

"Well?" said Mrs. Fitzhugh, interrogatively, when Genevieve went upstairs.

"I have not accepted him, mamma," said

that young lady. "I couldn't very well, as he didn't propose."

"But why did he not?" questioned Mrs. Fitzhugh, unable to comprehend the situation.

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied Genevieve. "Maybe he doesn't know how, and maybe he does not want to."

"He is just a little timid, that is all," remarked the mother. "I never saw a man more in love."

"Do you think I will have to propose to him, mamma?" asked Genevieve, demurely, as her mother kissed her good-night.

CHAPTER XIII.

BUYING A BRIDE.

JOHN GREYSTONE did not call on the Fitzhughs the following day, and no further mention was made of his failure to propose to Genevieve. Yet, on the plausible theory of cause and effect, the nervousness of the master of the house might have been ascribed to the non-appearance of the young capitalist.

Aunt Tildah, on the contrary, appeared to be in unusually good spirits, visibly heightened when the name of their recent visitor was mentioned. She imparted the information that he

had spoken to her of little Lucy Kent in very flattering terms, and wondered if he might not prove as fickle as better-bred men, and equally capable of transferring his affections. She conceived a sudden interest in the future prospects of her young nephews, and asked her brother whether he intended sending them to the University of Virginia, where the Fitzhugh boys had been educated from time out of mind. This question being pressed in the presence of the boys—who were as anxious as less aristocratic youngsters to indulge in the untried delights of a boarding-school—they did not fail to improve the occasion by begging to be sent there the coming fall, to the annoyance of their parents and the secret gratification of Aunt Tildah. Altogether, the day was an unsatisfactory one, and Judge Fitzhugh started to his office the next morning an hour earlier than was his wont. But the thoughts that had harassed him at home followed him every step of the way, through the dull streets to the post-office, and from the post-office to the Southern Hotel, where he spent a restless half hour, and from the Southern Hotel to his office over the bank, where they had been unwelcome visitors this many a day. Presently there is a step in the passage, followed by a knock on the door, and Judge Fitzhugh, starting as if the manifesta-

tion was one of a supernatural character, says nervously, "Come in." Whereupon a well-dressed gentleman, with dark hair and eyes and smiling white teeth, opens the door and enters.

"Ah, Sedgwick, good-morning. I'm glad to see you." And the Judge, rising, places a chair for that gentleman, who drops into it gracefully, and inquires politely about Mrs. and Miss Fitzhugh. During the conversation that ensues and continues for a half hour or more, Arthur Sedgwick does not fail to notice the pre-occupied manner of Judge Fitzhugh, though the latter has never been more polite, more conciliatory. "The ladies at the house have missed you lately, Arthur," he said. "You must not forget old friends, you know, even for the fair Lucy Kent."

Sedgwick's face clouded momentarily. "There is nothing in that, nothing," he said, hastily. "The ladies are very kind to miss me, I'm sure, but I did not suppose your friend Mr. Greystone allowed them an opportunity to miss anybody. By the way, are congratulations in order?"

"N—no," replied the Judge. "Greystone is only a friend of the family."

"I had hardly thought otherwise, but you know what a small place is for gossip. Of course, he has told you he is going away?"

"No," said Judge Fitzhugh, visibly interested. "It cannot be true. When is he going?"

"To-morrow, I think. I only just heard it at the bank. I'm not sure whether it's to-morrow, though, as I was not interested enough to pay much attention. Well, I'll have to be going. Please present my compliments to the ladies. Oh, about that five thousand dollars. I know the note is not due for six weeks, Judge, but I can use the money to advantage at the end of that time, and I thought I would remind you of it. Good-morning." And Arthur Sedgwick, who had smiled unceasingly during the hour that he had remained, except when Lucy Kent's name was mentioned, smiled himself out of the office just as John Greystone entered it.

For months Noel Fitzhugh had been tortured by the foreboding of ruin and disgrace that was ever before him until John Greystone's unexpected reappearance and his attitude as a probable purchaser of the coal land suggested the only hope that would have been possible. When Judge Fitzhugh's efforts to interest the capitalist in the famous land had proved unavailing, the only possible avenue of escape seemed closed, and the future had looked blacker than before, until Greystone's pronounced preference for

Genevieve gave the old man renewed hope and opened a broad way out of all his difficulties. After having won over his wife and daughter, without an exposure of his own double dealing, when success at last seemed fairly within his grasp, without apparent reason or cause—as if every hope was but a mirage created to torture him—John Greystone had apparently lost interest in Genevieve, and had taken a notion to leave the place. Judge Fitzhugh was in the dejected state of mind consequent upon such bitter reflections when Greystone entered the room.

There was a marked contrast between the latter and the smiling man who had just taken his departure. Sedgwick, handsome, polished, debonair, faultlessly attired, was the *beau ideal* of a gentleman, his very countenance reflecting the veneer of society, hiding the real man as effectually as the polish on his natty low shoes concealed the rough texture of the leather. And what availed the silk hat or the broadcloth coat of John Greystone, with his unruly locks and his scarred face? What time had number nine boots glided gracefully through the mazes of a waltz? What time had large, brown hands deftly fastened the buttons of a lady's glove? What marked contrast, then, between the gentleman and the common man. Greystone took the

chair that had just been vacated by Sedgwick and removed his hat long enough to mop his brow with an elaborately bordered handkerchief; then, replacing it on his head, he looked straight at Judge Fitzhugh, and said: "I overheard Sedgwick's remarks about that five thousand dollars; I was at the door and couldn't help it. You need not worry about it, though. It is a small sum, and I'll give you a check for it now if you say so."

"My dear sir!" exclaimed Judge Fitzhugh. "Really, I am at a loss, sir; I am at a loss—"

"To account for my generosity. Exactly; I understand. Now, Judge, business is business, and we cannot be too plain with each other."

"Certainly," assented Judge Fitzhugh, feebly.

"The fact is, I have become interested in that coal land of yours."

The eyes of the ruined man sparkled, and his voice trembled, as he replied: "I am delighted, sir, to hear you say so. I am more than delighted. Any arrangement that you see proper—"

"I am interested in it to the extent of fifty thousand dollars," interrupted John Greystone, coolly. "I propose to give you that sum of money—you can call it a loan if it suits you better—and you will retain entire control and ownership of the property."

Judge Fitzhugh rose from his chair and glanced out of the window on the dusty street and the dilapidated court-house, as if to assure himself by those familiar landmarks of the reality of the exciting moment. "I see. You wish to remain a silent partner in the mines?" he said, interrogatively.

"No, I don't want any partnership in them. I have enough mines now of another sort."

The Judge was at a loss to understand his visitor. "And the fifty thousand dollars?" he said, clinging to the most tangible words that had been uttered. "In what manner do you propose to remunerate yourself financially for the investment?"

"I don't propose to remunerate myself *financially*," replied Greystone. "And I don't want you to feel bound to put the money under ground. I don't mean it as a loan, either."

"My dear sir, will you please tell me what you do mean?" asked the Judge, desperately.

"You can call it a present, if you wish," said the other, looking keenly at Judge Fitzhugh.

The latter was unmistakably dazed, and in the few moments that elapsed ere he spoke tried vainly to divine the cause of the younger man's unheard-of generosity. He could think of but one cause that possessed an element of probability, and that was an exaggerated feeling of

gratitude for the attention that the man had received as a boy, thirteen years before, in his house. And yet there was something about his imperturbable demeanor, the cool indifference of his manner, that ill accorded with the idea. He approached Greystone effusively, with outstretched hand, which was oddly enough unnoticed by the latter, who had become absorbed in a dusty row of legal volumes on an adjacent shelf. Something prevented Judge Fitzhugh from pressing the unnoticed outward sign of his gratitude, but as he resumed his chair he drew it nearer to that of the other.

“My dear sir,” he said, his voice trembling with emotion, “I don’t know how I can thank you sufficiently for your unexampled generosity, but—I cannot accept it. I need the money and I believe that land is worth ten times the amount; but, sir, I have no claim on you.”

The words were worthy of a Fitzhugh, but a poorer student of mankind than John Greystone could have sounded their indecision. The faintest sneer curled his lip as he replied:

“As your son-in-law, Judge Fitzhugh, I can presume to make you a present that won’t be missed out of my pile.”

“That is a very different matter, my boy. I congratulate you with all my heart. You have seen Genevieve this morning, then?” And

Judge Fitzhugh fairly beamed over the culmination of his dearest hopes.

"I have not seen Genevieve," said the young man, coolly, "but I came here this morning to ask you for her hand in marriage."

"If you have come for my consent, I give it to you with all my heart," said the Judge, effusively. "There is no man that I would rather see my dear child marry, and I am sure that Mrs. Fitzhugh will feel equally honored, sir; but there is one other person concerned whose consent will be necessary, and that is Genevieve herself." He paused, but Greystone made no response, and, ascribing his silence to embarrassment, Judge Fitzhugh continued:

"I have told you how deeply you are esteemed by both Mrs. Fitzhugh and myself, but there is nothing dearer to us than our daughter's happiness; and I am sure you will understand that both her own and her husband's happiness will depend on their mutual love. I don't think you need feel disheartened. Genevieve has not made a confidant of me, but I have seen even more than you have, for our girls in the South don't show their love until it is asked. Only ask her, my boy. Come around this evening. You can be sure of a warm welcome."

"I will be on my way to St. Louis this evening," said Greystone, looking hard at the Judge.

"When you come back, then. I'm sure you won't be gone long," returned the latter, knowingly.

The father's confidence irritated him. "I have no intention of coming back," he said. "I will have important business interests in St. Louis that will prevent any trips in the near future. I am going to settle there and I am going to marry. You seem confident enough that your daughter will accept me, and I don't see what difference it will make whether the proposal comes through you or from me direct. If she will accept at all, she will accept it through you, and you can say what I would wish better than I could myself. I need not tell you that as my wife she will have everything that money can buy. Your consent is all that I want, and there is only one condition that I will name; that is, that the marriage be solemnized in St. Louis, where Mrs. Fitzhugh has near relatives. I will hand you fifty thousand dollars the day of the wedding. I will not presume to offer it to you until after we are married."

Mingled emotions of anger and mortification had brought an unwonted flush to Judge Fitzhugh's brow more than once while John Grey-stone was speaking, but his sense of helplessness restrained his feelings, and, after all, why should

he be astonished at any proposal made by so common a man as John Greystone. He was awkward enough to shrink from a proposal to a coquette who had laughed at his best efforts, and, recalling the barefooted outcast who had sold berries in Florissant, he could understand his desire to be married elsewhere. He even guessed, shrewdly, that the important business interests in a city where Genevieve had near relatives might have been contracted for a pretense. The fifty thousand dollars was the one tangible thought that never left his mind for an instant.

"I think I understand, Greystone," he said, a faint smile perceptible about the corners of his mouth. "I think I understand, and I think that Genevieve will, too. I give my consent and will do my best. I will write to you to-morrow."

"Thank you," said Greystone, rising to depart.

"Whatever happens, I wish you happiness, my boy, and God bless you!"

There was no help for it. Judge Fitzhugh held out his hand at parting, and, after he had gone, mechanically placed it in his pocket. For the hand that he had clasped so earnestly was clammy with coldness, the only visible sign of John Greystone's fiercely suppressed emotions.

However extraordinary Mrs. and Miss Fitzhugh might have deemed the hasty flight of one

John Greystone on the very evening of his strange proposal for the hand of Genevieve, his prospective father-in-law appeared perfectly satisfied as to the causes that had led to his sudden departure.

Before apprising Genevieve of the proposal, he sought Mrs. Fitzhugh and gave her as full an account of the interview at his office as was possible without disclosing the fact of the pecuniary consideration that was involved. For reasons of his own he preferred to remain silent on that subject, and only told his wife that, from the tenor of Greystone's conversation, he was confident that he would be as generous as they could wish. Mrs. Fitzhugh made no effort to conceal her dissatisfaction either with the manner of the proposal or the strange departure of the man who had made it, and declared his conduct barbarous from beginning to end. "Oh, I wish that the marriage was not necessary, Noel," she said, desperately.

Her husband's brow clouded. "We have discussed all that before, Martha, and I have told you how necessary it is."

"Why didn't he propose to her himself, like a man?" asked Mrs. Fitzhugh, warmly.

"My dear, it is impossible for you to understand how hard it would have been for him. He is awkward and bashful, and Genevieve has

put him off so often when he tried to do it—you know you told me so yourself—that I really believe he is a little afraid of her.”

“And why can’t they be married here?” persisted the lady. “What possible excuse can we give for sending Genevieve to his home to be married. It is unprecedented. It is a disgrace! People will never stop talking about it. His pretense of business is utterly ridiculous, and we would be laughed at by everybody if we were foolish enough to repeat it.”

“There is no need of repeating it, Martha,” said the Judge, quietly, taking one of her nervous hands in his own. “And Genevieve is not really going to his home to be married. St. Louis is as much her home as his, and your aunt, Mrs. Heighdecker, who lives for society, will be only too glad to have the wedding at her house. As for—”

“That doesn’t excuse him,” interrupted Mrs. Fitzhugh, “and it won’t keep people from talking, either. You know that as well as I do, Noel.”

“People won’t talk as much as you think they will, my dear. Besides, there is no necessity for telling them all the particulars. There is no reason why Genevieve shouldn’t visit her aunt, and there is no reason why Greystone shouldn’t court her in St. Louis, as well as here. When

the marriage takes place, people will more readily think that we allowed the ceremony to take place there to please Mrs. Heighdecker than to please John Greystone. Some of them may say that we couldn't afford the expense, and others may say that Genevieve has had her head turned by society, but you may be sure that nobody will ever guess the real reason."

"But that does not excuse Mr. Greystone," said Mrs. Fitzhugh, in a quieter tone, showing that her husband's arguments had not been without effect.

"No, that does not excuse John Greystone, Martha; but if you will only try to put yourself in his place and look at things from his—his common standpoint, you will not blame him as much as you do now. However necessary money may be, blood is blood, and John Greystone feels it more to-day with his million than he ever did before. He wouldn't acknowledge that he is ashamed of his origin, for there never was a common man who would; but he is, you may be sure, and he is ashamed to marry in a town where every man, woman and child knows that he once tramped the streets almost naked and half starved. If he had come from gentle people, he might feel differently, because then he would remember who he was; but as it is he doesn't want

to remember; he wants to forget, and his only chance is in a big city like St. Louis, where nobody ever heard of him in the old days. Can't you understand now why he would invent any sort of an excuse to be married there instead of here?"

"Yes," assented Mrs. Fitzhugh, hesitatingly. "I wonder if Genevieve can be brought to see it in that light?"

"You must explain it to her some way, Martha. You understand her better than I do. I wouldn't dwell any more than I could help on Greystone's common origin, for it would only turn her against him. As it is, I think she is inclined to like him, and I hope—I hope she will grow to love him. Don't you think she will, Martha? He is so much in love with her, and he will be able to do so much for her."

"She will be happier if she does; she is capable of a great love," said the mother, thoughtfully, almost regretfully. "But in any event she will not disappoint you, Noel. She has given her word and she will keep it."

So it was from Mrs. Fitzhugh that Genevieve first heard of the formal proposal of John Greystone, who was a hundred miles away at the time, sitting off by himself in the Pullman, looking out on the night with something very like a frown on his broad brow, and thinking of

Genevieve. Though the latter had at first haughtily resented what she termed "the insult of that man," schooled by her clever husband, Mrs. Fitzhugh made every excuse possible for Greystone, and, while acknowledging that he knew but little of the laws of polite society, she declared that his very ignorance palliated his offense.

"If he didn't know any better, then why didn't papa tell him?" asked the young girl, with heaving breast and flashing eyes. "Am I to be sent to St. Louis with a placard announcing that I am for John Greystone?"

She was so angry that Mrs. Fitzhugh was fain to repeat to her in the end every reason that her husband had advanced to palliate Greystone's conduct, and Genevieve, her sympathies once aroused, though only for the sensitiveness of a false pride, was more easily reconciled to the situation. But far more potent than her passing sympathy for the man she was to wed was her deep interest in the welfare of those of her own blood at home, and it was when the mother drew her thoughts to the pressing needs of those dear ones that she finally yielded, and said, "It doesn't matter where we are married, mamma, or when. I don't blame him for wanting to have it away from here, but I would have respected him more if he had shown more moral courage."

CHAPTER XIV.

WEDDING PREPARATIONS.

It was only a week before the wedding, and for nearly a month Genevieve had been the guest of her grand-aunt, Mrs. Eleanor Heighdecker. The last of several hundred invitations to the important social event had been distributed; an elaborate trousseau (Judge Fitzhugh had been very generous in that regard) had been selected by the joint efforts of the prospective bride and her aunt; the flowers had been ordered, and every detail had been attended to by the veteran of two-score of social campaigns. There seemed nothing left to be done but to receive gracefully the bouquets that arrived daily, and the visits of their donor a few hours later. Of course, Mrs. Heighdecker had made a few natural inquiries as to the antecedents and connections of John Greystone, and Genevieve had told her frankly that he was a self-made man, and that he had no connections that she was aware of. Mrs. Heighdecker was not slow to grasp the situation, but, having lived long enough to realize the necessity of money in her sphere, and being fully aware of the straitened circumstances of her niece's husband, she approved heartily of the match, and entered with

her usual enthusiasm into the complex arrangements for the wedding.

"No, my dear, I can't say that I think him handsome," she had remarked on one occasion, "but he is quite *distingué*, and that is much better. He behaves unusually well, too, under the trying circumstances."

Genevieve, lounging gracefully on a soft divan, raised her dark eyebrows interrogatively.

"I mean, dear, that he restrains his feelings in company. I never saw a man in his position who was less demonstrative, or, at the same time, more attentive. There are few prospective bridegrooms who don't make themselves more or less ridiculous in the eyes of the world generally, and more or less trying on the nerves of the poor girl."

"And you don't think Mr. Greystone makes himself ridiculous, then?"

"Not at all, my dear; I cannot imagine him in that role," replied Mrs. Heighdecker, complacently. "Of course, I don't doubt that he is demonstrative enough when you are alone together, which is the proper time for love-making."

"Do you think he is very much in love, Aunt Eleanor?"

"What a question! You just ask to hear me say yes. Why, of course I do. In the first

place, my dear, a young man with a million dollars can do a great deal of choosing, and it can be taken for granted that he marries for love; in the second place"—and the old lady looked admiringly at the graceful beauty before her—"he could not help loving you if he wanted to."

Genevieve did not reply, and presently became absorbed in her own reflections. Her aunt must be right, and it was natural to think that he loved her—she had been sure of it even before he had proposed, and the proposal in itself was proof enough. But he had *not* been demonstrative, and the remarkable decorum that had won such favor from Mrs. Heighdecker had been carried undisturbed into their own private interviews. It was a fact, actually a fact, that he had never kissed her, and he seemed more comfortable when Mrs. Heighdecker was in the room than when they were alone together. When he took her driving, that lady generally occupied a seat in the vehicle, and it was small wonder that she had conceived a liking for a man who showed her so much attention. And yet he must love her, for once when, with drooping lids and her fair face turned toward him, and one little hand resting on his arm, she had said, softly, "John, do you know that you have never told me that you love me?" the deep earnestness of his answer had thrilled her.

"I loved you the first time that I saw you," he said. "When I crept away sick and weak from your father's house, it was because I loved you. There was never one day in all those thirteen years on the coast that I did not think of you and pray for you and love you. I couldn't have stood all that I have if it had not been for that. When fortune came at last it was only dear to me because I could come back again to you. And now, now, if the whole world were mine, I would give it to make you my wife."

And so it must be that he loved her. He had seen so little of women that awkwardness was natural to him in their presence, and he probably had crude and exaggerated ideas of the deference that was due them. It would all come right in time, and Genevieve, who had reconciled herself more and more to her marriage, as she saw more of the glamour of St. Louis society, borrowed no trouble from the apparent shyness of her fiancé. The truth is that she had entertained a morbid dread of his caresses from the very hour that she had accepted him. His apparent stoicism had at first delighted, then piqued her, and presented him in the light of an enigma. However, it was not interesting enough to worry over after all, and Genevieve was not aware of any great desire to fathom it.

With such apparent indifference for the man she was about to wed, it may seem strange that a girl in the full flush of youth and beauty could have approached the sacrificial altar with smiles upon her fair face. Yet it must be remembered that under the Fitzhugh roof family prestige had ever been the supreme idol. She was not devoid of feeling, for her nature was intense, and no glamour of wealth could have won her consent to the marriage had it not been for the deep affection that she had ever cherished for her parents and brothers. In the brief yet bitter mental struggle that had preceded her yielding, it was her unselfishness that had conquered, for she knew that only through the sacrifice of herself could her father be saved from ruin and disgrace, and the future of the young brothers who bore the Fitzhugh name secured. And for all this, for the re-establishment of a proud house that had been wellnigh ruined for its loyalty to the sacred cause of the South, only the sacrifice of herself was demanded in the acceptance of a husband whom her parents had chosen for her. Had she ever loved, had her troth been plighted or her love given to another, it would have been different with her, for the same nature that sacrificed so much to the loyalty of her house would have sacrificed a thousand times more to the sweeter loyalty of a woman's love. She had

looked mischief out of her blue eyes; she had smiled trouble with her red lips; she had sung low songs when trembling fingers turned the leaves; she had flirted like many a beauty before her and since, from no deeper motive than a young girl's thoughtlessness and a woman's love of admiration; but her heart had never been touched, else had she been otherwise than she was, and John Greystone with his million might have sighed in vain.

CHAPTER XV.

A NEW VERSION OF "BEAUTY AND THE BEAST."

It was early in October, the Indian summer of the pleasantest season of the year, and the sun never shone fairer, the world never looked brighter than on the day of John Greystone's wedding.

Judge and Mrs. Fitzhugh had come on to be present at the ceremony, and had accepted the hospitality of Mrs. Heighdecker, who had imported a new gown for the occasion and fairly dazzled the eyes of all beholders with the diamonds that sparkled in her false hair and about her wrinkled throat.

Genevieve had six bridesmaids, judiciously selected from the very inner circle of the *ton*.

The groom's best man, who had been carefully chosen by Mrs. Heighdecker, was Archibald Seyton, a tall, handsome fellow, who had played the part a score of times—always on brilliant occasions. It was a church wedding, followed by a grand reception at the house, and everybody who was anybody was there.

There was less space given by the newspapers to social events in those days than there is now, but the brilliancy of the event had become noised abroad, and there was not a newspaper in the city unrepresented on the occasion. Old matrons and young matrons, some leaning on the arms of their husbands, and others alone; spinsters of antebellum days, who had been shelved, as the term goes, this many a day, and whose presence was not generally solicited at smaller events; ripe, well-seasoned beauties of three or four seasons, and fresh young *débutantes* who had but just opened their petals to the social sun; old men and young men and middle-aged men; some who came there for champagne, and others who came there for more substantial and less exhilarating refreshment; some who came in search of divertisement, and others who came in search of an heiress; old and young, dull and gay, of both sexes, thronged the flower-decked parlors and passed in an endless stream of embodied congratulations before the bride and

groom. And among all those fair women the bride was the fairest. The French hairdresser who had toiled in her profession for more years than the bride had known, had accomplished her *chef-d'œuvre* at last in the fluffy coils of sunny brown that graced the dainty head of the beauty. Old Dalrymple—that old, old beau, who had danced with the grandmothers of half the girls present in his youth, who had smiled and flattered for a half-century, who had been a lion in his day, and who had been laughed at for a score of years—old Dalrymple, who had never married, stood where he could see her the whole evening, and declared “that she was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen in his life—except one.”

And John—how did that common man deport himself on the occasion?

“Well; undeniably well,” as Mrs. Fitzhugh remarked to her urbane husband, who had concluded certain little financial arrangements with his son-in-law that very morning.

“My dear, this is the happiest day of my life,” said the Judge, enthusiastically. “Genevieve will be a very happy woman.”

“Yes, I think she will be,” assented Mrs. Fitzhugh. “She doesn’t look unhappy. I do believe she has made up her mind to like him. She will have everything that money can give her, and if he is good to her—if he only makes

her love him, it will be for the best after all."

"Have you heard the new version of 'Beauty and the Beast?'" queries that sarcastic old young man, Stillwell Chatterton, of Miss Inosent, the *débutante*, to whom he is devoting his attentions.

"No. Is there a new version?" she asks, innocently.

"Oh, yes; I'm surprised that you have not heard it. I'll tell it to you. It seems that once upon a time, ages and ages ago, there was a certain damsel who inhabited an enchanted castle ten thousand leagues from anywhere. Although this damsel's father was an ogre and her mother an ogress, they were exceedingly fond of her, as was she of them. When she was quite young she read a story of a beautiful woman who had been universally charming because of the comeliness of her appearance, and the damsel thereupon asked the ogress if she, too, was not beautiful. The ogress answered: 'Yes, my child; but'—her features assuming a look of inexpressible sadness as she enunciated the last vexatious word. The damsel then sought the ogre, and asked him the same ingenuous question, whereupon he answered: 'Yes, my child; but'—and lapsed into a sadness that changed him from his normal color to a deep blue. And hence the

word 'blues,' Miss Inosent. Now, the damsel was sorely troubled by the replies of her parents, and more so as the sadness of the ogress and the blues of the ogre showed no signs of disappearing from that day. Shortly after this the ogre and ogress left their castle of enchantment, and conveyed the damsel with them. They met a great number of people, and the damsel asked many of them if she was not beautiful, and every one, without exception, answered: 'Yes, you are; but'—until she was wellnigh distracted. And so curiosity came into the world. One day, after having returned to the enchanted castle, she was weeping bitterly over the tortures inflicted upon her by curiosity, when a Siwellativygod suddenly appeared before her. Now a Siwellativygod, in the story that I am telling, was all-powerful, which you would easily understand if you knew the significance of his name, which, by the way, nobody in the world has ever known. This Siwellativygod was so affected by the extremity of her grief that he promised her, on the spot, that she should have gratified any one wish that she might name."

"And she wished to be beautiful!" Miss Inosent exclaimed.

"No, she did not. If she had, that would have ended the story," continued Mr. Chatterton impressively. "She simply wished to know

why the ogre and ogress and everybody else had always used the inexplicable 'but' after saying that she was beautiful. At this wish the Siwella-tivygob laughed immoderately, and told her the reason was (there were no mirrors in those days) that, while perfectly beautiful in all other respects, her complexion was abominable and would remain so until she could rub it with yellow sand, when she would become so exceedingly beautiful that all men would worship her; that her mother's gloom would disappear, and her father, who had become bluer than any indigo, would resume his natural color. From that time on—I must hasten with my story, for I fear it is boring you—the one great desire of the damsel's life was to obtain some of the yellow sand. Never a day passed without a proposal for her hand, but her invariable answer was that she would only marry that suitor who would bring her the yellow sand. Hundreds came and went away hopeless, all for lack of the yellow sand, until the damsel (unlike young ladies of our day, Miss Inosent) became so weary of refusing suitors that a notice was posted on the castle gate to the effect that any suitor who entered without yellow sand would be beheaded. Strange to say, no suitors came after that for so long a time that the grass began to grow about the gate. But one day a Beast entered the castle and made

his way straight to the side of the damsel, where he stood upon his hind legs, and, placing one paw upon his heart, made a declaration of love, in language so uncouth that only the varied experience of the damsel enabled her to distinguish the meaning of his words. She was greatly horrified, and the ogre was just about to order the monster beheaded, when he showed them a pouch filled to the brim with the inestimable yellow sand. Then the ogre and ogress embraced him, and the damsel married him within an hour. What do you think of the new version?"

"I don't know," replied Miss Inosent, who never did quite understand that strange Mr. Chatterton. "But did he always remain a beast?"

"I don't know; the story left off right there," said Mr. Chatterton, glancing reflectively at John Greystone as he turned the young lady over to her chaperone and made his way toward the punch-bowl.

Of course the guests gossiped about the bride and groom. There never was a wedding in high life where they did not, and there never will be. But, generally speaking, they knew little enough of the financial affairs of that affable Judge Fitzhugh. Mrs. Heighdecker was rich, and there was apparently no necessity of a forced marriage; the bride looked animated and happy,

and, above all, the appointments, the refreshments, the wines, were beyond reproach; and so there was a dearth of severity in the inevitable gossip that had entered Mrs. Heighdecker's parlors. At last, after much feasting and flirting, and congratulating; after truth had been inflated out of all resemblance to itself with the inexhaustible gas of flattery; after petty jealousies had given any number of little stabs that would smart more or less, according to the sensitiveness and age of the smiling recipients of those tart little barbs; after the maximum number of white lies had finally exhausted themselves and grown tiresome by repetition, the guests began to depart, and an hour later the last carriage had rolled away with its weary occupants. That is, the last carriage but one—the carriage that was to convey the bride and groom to their new home, located a mile distant in a suburb that had recently come into fashion. John had purchased there the costliest mansion that had ever been raised in St. Louis, and had furnished it in a style so extravagant that even Mrs. Heighdecker, who had taken Genevieve there time and again, had held up her jeweled fingers in astonishment.

They spoke very little—those two—as they were borne away toward their new home. Genevieve wondered at the silence of her husband,

and was even a trifle annoyed by it. But, after all, she did not feel unhappy. She had accepted the situation gracefully, and Mrs. Fitzhugh had spoken with a mother's intuition when she said that Genevieve had made up her mind to like her husband. She knew that he was not her ideal, and she had shuddered at the first thought of spending her life with a man who was not what she called refined. But he might have been worse; he might have been even more homely; he might have been uncouth or ridiculous. He loved her, and she had made up her mind to like him. Something had developed in his nature that she did not understand, and that interested her. She was not sure that she did not like him a little even now. He was her husband. She put her hand out timidly and touched his own. It was only a touch, but his hand was so cold that it startled her, and the next instant he had changed his position to open the window and give some instruction to the coachman. They were near their destination, and a minute later the carriage had stopped before the costly mansion that John had chosen for their residence. With the same awkward deference with which he would have proffered his services to Mrs. Heighdecker, he offered his arm to Genevieve; and side by side they passed the portal of their home between the two liveried footmen

who had flung open the front door on their arrival. It was a large double house, with a well-stocked library and smoking-room to the left of the broad hallway, and a parlor, occupying the entire length of the house, on the opposite side. It was to the latter apartment, lonely for all its brilliant lights and sumptuous furniture, that John Greystone led his bride.

With awkward ceremony he conducted her to a chair, and went over and stood near the mantel, with one elbow leaning upon it, and his eyes bent upon her. Genevieve saw for the first time that his face was haggard and drawn, and so white that the disfiguring scar upon it seemed livid.

"John, you are ill," she exclaimed, and started involuntarily to go to him, when she was stopped by a harshly imperative gesture of his hand.

"I am not ill. If I were, I would not want you any nearer," he said, with bitter earnestness. "We have not understood each other, but we will from now on. I am going to tell you the story of my life. I know yours, and it's only fair that you should know mine. I don't think you have ever realized how much I have loved you. I cannot understand it myself. From the first day that I saw you I loved you, and the first happiness I knew was when I saved you from that dog. You may have forgotten that, for I was only a vagabond, and it wasn't pleas-

ant to remember that a barefooted pariah saved your life at the peril of his own. Don't interrupt me—I am not refined, but I believe it is ill-bred to interrupt. You must hear me out first. After I was brought to your father's house, I was thankful that I had been bitten, because it brought me nearer to you. Every day I loved you more, and I think the desire to see you was what kept me alive. When I went away it was because I thought gold could be won in California, and that, if I could only get rich, I could come back and marry you. All that I went through you will never know. It is a long story and would not interest you. But every hour of all the years I thought of you and loved you. I met a man out there named West, and when I told him about you, he laughed at me and told me you would be married when I saw you again. The thought that you might be nearly crazed me, and I worked half the night for months. It was at night that I struck the mine, and the next day I was on my way to the States. I thought that you would be glad to see me. I thought, cursed fool that I was, that you might even have cared a little for me all that time. I pictured your surprise and joy at our first meeting. I always thought of you as being beautiful, but I told myself that, even if you were maimed or disfigured, I would love you just the same.

“You know the rest. You know how you laughed at me when I tried to tell you, again and again, that I loved you. It was hard to bear, but I forgave you and waited, willing to be laughed at in the hope of winning your love. That was very presumptuous, and I know now that I couldn’t have done it. If your father hadn’t been a beggar, you’d have sent me about my business soon enough. But, fortunately, he was a beggar, and he wanted money, and so did your mother, and so did you, for that matter, and when he found out that he couldn’t sell me his land, why, he made up his mind to sell me his daughter. He proposed it to you, and you objected—not because you dreaded to perjure yourself at the altar, not because you had any pity for me—you never thought of my feelings an instant—but because I was so common that a union with me was abhorrent to you. But you consented, finally, and when your father put you up for sale I made a bid for you. I offered him fifty thousand dollars. All things considered, it was a big sum, but I had thought the matter over and I wanted you. I believe that money is good, because you can buy whatever you want with it. So I bought you, just as I would have bought a horse, or a house, or a yacht, or anything else that was for sale, because I wanted to own you.”

The words were spoken so harshly that they grated on his own ear. He paused and looked unrelentingly on the woman before him. She was deadly pale, and he could see her hand trembling on the cushion where it rested. She had aged strangely, and in her eyes was a look that he had seen in those of wounded animals, waiting, helpless, for the home thrust of the hunter's knife. Only that in his wife's eyes, mingled with that glance, was a look of unutterable loathing. It may have been this look, or his own pride, or an uncontrollable pity, or the last spark of extinguished love, or his own predetermination, that prompted his next words. "Now we understand each other," he said. "I knew how you felt toward me, and it is only fair that you should know how I feel toward you. I won't ill-treat you. This side of the house is yours and the other side is mine. I won't force myself on you, and I don't expect you to force yourself on me. We couldn't be further apart if I had stayed on the coast." Without moving from where he stood he touched a bell, and a neat-looking old woman answered the summons. "Mrs. Kirk is my housekeeper. She will show you to *your* apartments," he said. Genevieve rose from her chair, nervously, and stood a moment to steady herself. In that instant all her past life, all her present and her future came

before her—hopelessly, irrevocably. Full under the light of the chandelier, with one hand thrust into his pocket and the other grasping the tapestry on the mantel; with sunken eyes and the cruel scar glowing on the haggard face, she saw her husband. Then she turned from him and passed out of the room, and he heard her faltering, uncertain steps upon the stairs.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

A MAN OF BUSINESS.

WHATEVER feelings of bitterness, shame or hatred John Greystone had aroused in the breast of Genevieve, in that first cruel interview of man and wife, were hidden by an exterior of indifference that would have baffled a keener judge of human nature than John Greystone was. As rigidly as he had fulfilled his part in the payment of the stipulated amount to Judge Fitzhugh did she fulfill hers in maintaining and increasing their prestige in the social world. Her toilets were faultless, her equipages were unsurpassed, and the entertainments at the great granite pile that they called home were the talk of the social world. And in the eyes of that

gay social world in which she took so prominent a position Genevieve was a happy wife. A few of her more intimate friends found her changed, but in what manner even Mrs. Heighdecker could not have explained.

To John it seemed that she had grown older. He noticed an unwonted compression about the sensitive lips and a new light in her eyes. He felt that beneath all her apparent indifference she despised him. Despite the fact of their mutual knowledge that she had been bought and sold just as any other expensive ornament in his house, he felt, with impotent, silent anger, that she despised him. She had spoken no words that could have inspired the feeling, and the events of that first night had never been mentioned by either of them. But, though they met daily, though they usually dined and often went driving and attended entertainments together, he felt further removed from her than ever before. With all his hatred of her class, a hatred that had increased tenfold, he could not deny the superiority of the pride that sustained her in the trying ordeal of her daily life—that pride of blood and name, false though it might be, that could have smiled confidently always, if only the world believed in the mask. And for all his own stubborn pride, for all his knowledge that he had bought and paid for every luxury of

their lives, that his money alone had saved the proud name of Fitzhugh from disgrace, no day passed in which he did not feel his inferiority. He would not have acknowledged it even to himself, but he felt it none the less keenly for that, in a hundred petty details. He felt it in conscious awkwardness in his own parlors; he felt it when Miss Inosent, in the presence of his wife, commanded him playfully not to call her "Mam," a harmless Westernism in which he had been wont to indulge with thoughtless frequency in his conversations with the fair sex; he felt it at his own dinner parties, in the presence of guests who were always more at their ease than their host—notably on one occasion, when he had discovered that he was the only person present using his knife with the fish; he felt it in the different demeanor of the colored servants toward himself and their mistress—not that the well-trained menials were impertinent, not that they intended to show any difference; but there was a difference, and the master who paid them, the master who vaunted the belief that money could buy all things, felt it daily.

It was fortunate for John Greystone during those first months of his married life that the reorganization of the vast iron works that he had purchased required a good deal of time and energy, affording him a divertisement from the

dissatisfaction of his home life that amusements could not have furnished.

In proportion as his hatred of the exclusive set, to which he had bought an *entrée*, increased, did his interest deepen in the great lower class, from which he had risen. He felt more at ease with the foreman of the works than he did in the company of the fashionable gentlemen who smoked his cigars and drank his wines. He could throw one leg over the arm of his chair in the presence of Jim Stubbs, and he could emphasize his remarks with any number of Westernisms with perfect freedom from embarrassment, but he could not have done either comfortably in a *tête-à-tête* with that suave Mr. Stillwell Chatterton, who he always thought was secretly laughing at him, and who had declined a cigar on one occasion with the casual remark that any brand costing more than ten cents was too strong for him.

The numerous buildings of the Great Western Iron Works covered acres of ground, and a thousand men and boys were employed in them. Including the families of the employés, there were several thousand persons indirectly dependent on the great smelting and manufacturing concern, and they formed a town of no inconsiderable proportions just on the western outskirts of St. Louis. John drove out every morning be-

tween eight and nine o'clock, and back again in the evening in time for late dinner. Some months after he had obtained control of the works, he had called the men together in the town hall and delivered a brief speech, in which he informed them that their work was not generally as satisfactory as it might be, and that he believed the cause was due to lack of interest. There were some dark scowls among the laborers at this, and a distinct murmur of disapproval of their new master's frank utterance, but it was only momentary, for his next words lightened a thousand tired hearts under the coarse blouses.

"When a man finds a defect in anything under his control," he said, "he should try to find a remedy for it, and that's what I tried to do when I found that you men lacked interest here. First, I thought of putting the whole lot of you on piece-work, and I spoke with Jim Stubbs about it. But he talked against it, and said it wouldn't do, and so I tried to think of a better plan, and I've done it. After to-day every dollar of profit over ten per cent will be divided up among you men according to the amount of your wages. Last year the profit was almost nine and a quarter per cent; this year you can make it twelve if you want to. And now that you are all together, I want to say one more thing. I want you men to come right to me when any-

thing goes wrong, and I'll do my best to set it right. I've seen as hard times as any of you, and I've worked a heap harder many a day."

It was not much of a speech, but it gave a new object in life to a thousand rough toilers who had looked always upon its darker side, and there was no lack of interest after that. As for John, the only happiness he had enjoyed since the day when Tildah Fitzhugh had exhibited one of her family skeletons was derived from the practical success of his theory. But he had not betrayed the origin of the idea, which was the result of the merest accident. He had started to the works an hour earlier than usual one morning, when his horse cast a shoe, and John, leaving him with the blacksmith, whose shop was located within a hundred yards of the main office of the Great Western Iron Works, started to complete the distance on foot. It happened that he passed near two of the poorer class of iron-workers, and overheard the following colloquy:

"See here, Tim, ain't it 'bout time yer was gettin' ter work?"

"Naw, I ben't got to. I ben't goin' to work no more'n I got to."

"Yer'll get docked, then, er fired out."

"Naw, I won't neither. Smikes ain't keepin' no track o' these tailin's, an' I heered Jim Stubbs say he'd be at the pit all mornin'. I ain't

goin' ter work any mor'n I have ter work. See? What does them fool blokes get that works the hardest? They jest gets wored out an' dies sooner. I ben't no fool bloke, I ben't."

And that was the colloquy that had led to the great step toward socialism. Six months before the master would have discharged the idler on the spot, and put a stricter surveillance over the less important branches of the works. On another morning, at another hour, it might have borne no good fruit, but the prosperous man had suffered keenly in those six last months. Under the rough exterior and boastful demeanor were feelings susceptible to pain and sensitive to ridicule; beyond the firm lips that had scorned the patrician woman, and far beneath his assumed arrogance of affluence, was a restless, unacknowledged pain in the thought that she despised him. He had built the barrier between them; he strengthened it every day, but at night a wretched man beat against it impotently and struggled against the work of his own hands. Yet his sorrow had taught him a broader charity, except toward the one hated class, and so it was that the words of Tim Pudder fell like an ugly seed upon a fertile soil and blossomed into a fair flower at last.

John seldom mentioned business affairs at home, and he did not speak of the new order of

things to his wife. He told Jim Stubbs, and that worthy man, reticent with all men, and all women except one, straightway told Mrs. Stubbs under the veil of secrecy, and so in the course of time the story became known through all Irontown. Tim Pudder, the tale even reached thy dull ears, and the pollen of the flower fell and thrived on the barren soil of thy stunted nature.

So the first half-year of John Greystone's married life came and went. And through him the lives of thousands were changed by his coming, and many a dull path knew a little more of brightness; but his own path traversed the shadow unchanged, seeming ever to diverge further and further from the footsteps of his wife.

CHAPTER II.

THE CREST ON THE SILVER SPOON.

It is doubtful if Genevieve would have attributed any refinement of feeling, any gentleness of nature to her husband. Nor was it natural that she should. She had never taken the trouble to study him before their marriage, and since that event the impenetrable coldness of the man seemed his dominant characteristic. After her word was given, after her honor was pledged,

after she was powerless in his hands, he had chosen to heap insults upon her and spurn her from him. He had boastingly shown her the grossest part of his being, and only the grossest. Was it strange, then, that the bitter feeling against him should have retained its intensity. Again and again was he arraigned before the silent tribunal of her thoughts, only to be as often condemned. Her own deception, practiced solely from motives of love for her parents, was trivial in her eyes in comparison with that of her husband, and her fault appeared less grievous when she reflected that its discovery could have wreaked but little mental sorrow on one whose nature was so coarse.

While she was deeply grateful for his expressed determination to live apart from her, the gratitude was not felt toward him. What gratitude could she feel toward that man who hated her so bitterly that he scorned her for a companion, and yet had coveted her for the double purpose of profiting by her social position and gratifying his hatred in her humiliation? She was humbled, deeply humbled, but fiercely determined that he should never dream of her humiliation. She felt that her best weapon was the assumption of indifference. She could have wounded him and angered him at every turn, but he would have thought that it was because

she was herself angry and stooped to retaliation. She would have him think that the world was as bright for her as before; that the pursuit of every empty pleasure was as keen, as joyous; that his opinion of her was too valueless to cloud one hour of her life; that his masterstroke had failed of its purpose and fallen wide of the mark.

One early summer afternoon she was alone in the parlor, seated at the piano, and humming over a popular air from the latest opera, when her husband entered the room with gloves and hat in hand. She stopped singing at once and turned toward him questioningly. "The landau is at the door," he said. "Are you going driving this evening?"

"No, I don't care about going this evening," she answered; then added, "I will go, if you wish me to."

"I don't wish you to," he said, more shortly than was his wont, as he turned from the room and entered the library. She heard the rubbing of a match against the sandpaper and knew that he was lighting a cigar. She thought it probable that he had bitten off the end of it angrily because of her indifference, and there was a vague sense of satisfaction in the reflection; then the front door opened and shut, and she heard his step on the flagging. A tiny wreath of blue smoke curled in at the open window,

and, turning her fair head slightly, she glanced out. She saw her husband draw his foot back abruptly just as he was about to place it on a lower step; then he stooped down and picked up something from the stone, and, looking more closely, she discerned a caterpillar on his broad palm. She discerned more than that; for, as he bent his gaze upon the worm, she saw a protecting tenderness in his eyes that was a revelation to her. He had not noticed her, and walked around to the other side of the carriage, where he laid it unharmed upon the grass.

And *he* had done this—her husband; the man who had wounded her; the stern man whom she had deemed incapable of tenderness. It was the first glimpse that she had had of his better nature; she might arraign him again and again before the silent tribunal where she had so often passed judgment upon him, but never again without a pleader in his cause in the memory of that gentle act. Yet—yet—if he had only been tender with her.

There had been a tacit understanding between them that neither would wait dinner for the other, but that evening, for the first time, Genevieve waited for her husband. The butler announced the meal as usual at seven o'clock, but she waited in the gathering twilight for the sound of the carriage wheels. When half-past

seven came she went in to dinner alone, and had nearly finished the meal when her husband returned. The drive could not have been a pleasant one, for his brow wore its accustomed gloom. He bestowed a surprised glance on his wife, and then looked at the clock significantly.

“Have you been out?” he asked.

“No,” she answered; “I was not hungry, and I was reading when dinner was announced, so I didn’t come down till half-past seven.”

He looked at her keenly, and said, sarcastically: “That is very well. I actually thought it possible that you might have been waiting for me. I don’t want you ever to do that under any circumstances.”

There was scarcely a word spoken between them after that until the bell rang, and Mrs. Heighdecker, Miss Inosent and Mr. Chatterton were announced. Genevieve had never welcomed their coming more warmly.

Mr. Seyton and Mr. Foxhall, a recent acquaintance from New York, dropped in a little later and found their young hostess as smiling and gay as usual. She seemed to be in her element. There were strolls about the garden, and music, and refreshments later on, and gossip without end. Little Miss Inosent declared, enthusiastically, that Mrs. Greystone was the most brilliant woman she had ever seen, and asked John, point-

blank, how he ever managed to win her. Mr. Chatterton looked amused, and John, speechless for an instant, had just begun to stammer out an awkward reply, when his wife, with that patrician ease that all the wealth of California could not have given him, turned toward the group and said, laughingly: "Lily, I married him for the express purpose of convincing him that I was a paragon, and I haven't succeeded yet; so you need not try." And she hummed the old lines gayly:

"Needles and pins; needles and pins;
When a man marries, his trouble begins."

The evening passed away as a score of evenings had passed before, with wit and laughter, and song and wine—that is, mint juleps; for Mrs. Greystone was famous for her mint juleps, as her mother had been before her. The eyes of little Miss Inosent brightened as she sipped hers. "How do you make a mint julep, Mrs. Greystone?" she asked.

"Well, I'll give you the recipe," replied the fair hostess. "First, you fill a goblet half full of cracked ice and sprinkle it well with sugar; then you put in some fresh mint and crush it lightly; fill the goblet with bourbon and stir the julep well with a silver spoon."

“But you have left out just one thing,” said Mr. Chatterton, from the cushions of his easy-chair. “If the silver spoon has a crest on it, why, so much the better.”

John put his glass down noisily, and gave one quick, angry glance at the unconscious Chatterton, who blandly asked Mrs. Greystone for one more song.

After the song Mrs. Heighdecker declared that it was time to go, and presently the stout old lady was assisted out to her carriage. As it rolled away the occupants looked back and waved their handkerchiefs gayly toward the host and hostess standing in the lighted doorway. Genevieve lingered a few moments after the vehicle had disappeared, and when she turned to go in John had already gone, and the library door was closed as she passed it on her way upstairs. An hour later, when the lights had been extinguished and the house was all still, the door was opened and a gloomy man emerged and passed out into the grounds adjoining the house, where his long, restless strides could be heard far into the sleepless night. He looked up at the stars and wandered back again in fancy to the old mining days on the coast, to the days when he had sought gold in the hills while the sun lasted, and knowledge in the lore of Alfred West, by the lonely camp-fire, always with the one object;

only the one object that made life so full. And now—he stopped abruptly and clinched his hand as he muttered under his breath: “Now I have won all, I have bought everything I want; if there was anything more that I wanted I could buy it.”

CHAPTER III.

POLITICS AND SOCIETY.

Two years had passed since the night on which John Greystone discovered the Little Fred Gold Mine. The spell of money had proved as potent as the veriest Mammon-worshiper could have prophesied. He had fast horses, a magnificent dwelling, an art gallery that was unrivaled in the western country, a wife beautiful enough to excite the envy of half the women who saw her, an entrée to the ultra-fashionable set and a score of toadies within its inner circle; even his last pet project, the co-operative plan, promised to be a splendid success, and yet—John Greystone was not happy. He grew moodier, more restless every day, and lost interest in those pursuits from which he had derived the most pleasure a few months before. He had taken to horseback riding at one time, and as he had paid a fabulous sum for the gaited

animal that he rode, he derived considerable pleasure from the knowledge that he always attracted attention in his rides on the boulevard. There were a score of men in Genevieve's set who rode, and there was an undeniable gratification to him in the thought that of them all none bestrode so fine an animal as his handsome Arabian. Quite naturally he ascribed the frequent glances that were bent upon him to the envious admiration of those whom he passed on his rides. Once he thought that he surprised a derisive smile on the faces of Chatterton and Seyton. But, though the two equestrians named held very erect, he knew well enough that the cobs on which they were mounted could have been bought for a tenth part of the sum which he had paid to the former owner of Selim; and with this clinching argument in mind, it is small wonder that he formed the satisfactory conclusion that envy had prompted the assumed mirth of the gentlemen. Well had it been for him that day if he had confined his ride to the boulevard, instead of ambling down a by-lane that intersected the main road.

For on the edge of this by-lane were a group of boys, who paused, in the midst of an exciting game of mumbly-peg, to gaze upon the lone horseman. With the memory of that derisive smile still in mind, John Greystone rode slowly

by, and, as he passed them, the biggest boy sang out, sharp and clear: "Say, mister, what's the matter with yer elbows?" Then a younger and shriller voice shouted: "Why don't yer let yer stirrups down, mister?" And the big boy, not to be outdone in criticism, yelled after him as a last taunt: "Get off that horse an' lem me show you how to ride once." John felt relieved when he had ridden out of ear-shot of those independent young critics, and then, with the memory of those derisive smiles of Chatterton and Seyton still uppermost in his thoughts, he took note of the position of his elbows and the length of his stirrups. The next afternoon he rode out in the landau with his fair wife at his side and with his eyes bent upon every equestrian that they passed. Alas, of them all, there was not one whose elbows were held horizontally; not one whose stirrups were so abominably short as his had been. No wonder they had looked at him and smiled at him. He understood it readily enough now, and Selim was sold within a week. It was a little thing, but it added fuel to his hatred of that well-bred class who could ride and dance gracefully, and bow and smile derisively with the same well-bred grace. It was a little thing, but he wondered how many of them had noticed how abominably he rode, whether they had discussed it or not, and whether Mrs.

Heighdecker had heard of it; and, worse than all, he pictured his wife laughing scornfully at him as he had ridden out of the gate with arms akimbo again and again.

He felt a lack of interest in social pleasures, too. Somehow or another he began to feel that he did not fit in well with the others, and that the considerable sums indirectly invested in society paid the least returns of any of his numerous investments. He wondered at times whether his wife and Mrs. Heighdecker and Miss Inosent and all those others really enjoyed the endless whirl as much as they appeared to. He knew that he did not himself, and he felt guilty when he reflected over the numerous times that he had assumed a pleasure he did not feel merely because of the opinion of the people he had schooled himself to despise. Of course, society had its pleasures. There was an undoubted gratification that night at the charity ball, in the knowledge that he, John Greystone, was its very chiefest patron, and there were other occasions when he garnered some return for his expenditures; but, on the whole, "society" began to appear very empty to him, and he rather looked down upon himself for his frequent sacrifices in its gilded temples. There was, really, only one thing left to the rich man from which he derived any genuine pleasure,

and that was the great co-operative plan that he had instituted at the iron-works. But now that its success had become a certainty; now that less of his time and personal supervision was required at the works, there were hours that hung heavy on his hands—aye, and on his heart as well. He was oppressed with a sense of unutterable loneliness. He only, of all men whom he knew, was without companionship. There was no living creature in whose veins flowed blood kindred to his own, and he sought vainly for the face of a friend among the numerous acquaintances that he had formed. For all its splendor, there was less comfort in his palace than in the humblest home of his humblest iron-worker, and among all that brood of toilers there was not one to whom companionship was denied.

It was such a loneliness as has steeped souls in sin, and from which energy has fled terror-stricken, achieving greatness in its flight. And it was at this time that John Greystone's energy found an object of concentration.

It was at a dinner party at Mrs. Heighdecker's that the object presented itself. It is needless to say that the viands were the choicest, the wines excellent, and the appointments generally superb. The silver service, so old that the monogram was worn from half the pieces, had been in the family a century.

"Do you know that husks would taste good eaten from such an heir-loom?" said Mr. Seyton, delicately poisoning the spoon that had excited his comment.

"Very well, I shall borrow the spoons from Mrs. Heighdecker, and you shall have a dish of husks the next time you call on me," said Mrs. Greystone, mischievously. "How do you prefer them?"

"Prepared by your own fair hands," was the gallant response.

"This spoon has 'De Courcey' on it," said John, indicating the letters with the end of a broad finger. "Was that your father's name, Mrs. Heighdecker?"

"Oh, no; that was my great-grandfather's name," said the old lady, as pleasantly as though she were entirely oblivious of the quick glance exchanged between Seyton and Chatterton, or the quicker flush on the cheek of Genevieve.

"You must be related to Ernest de Courcey, are you not?" asked Mr. Seyton.

"Yes, we are related in some way—about forty-second cousins, I think," said Mrs. Heighdecker.

"You know his father was a Virginian," Mr. Seyton remarked, after a dainty sip of champagne.

“Oh, yes; and that branch of my family were Virginians, too. That is what we base our relationship on. You know all F.F.V.’s are related in Virginia.”

“Have you heard that De Courcey is going to run for Congress in November?” asked Mr. Kavanagh, a gentleman who was generally well informed on political subjects, having made them a study ever since a dashing Creole beauty from New Orleans (who had made men a study) had told him how much he resembled the great Benton. The fact that Benton was six feet two, a brunette, and very homely, while Leslie Kavanagh was five feet five, a blonde, and quite good-looking, had but little weight with the latter. He grinned affably, proposed to the beauty that evening, and would have married her, if a better catch had not presented himself. But that casual remark changed the man for all time; he read law, studied politics, familiarized himself with every detail of the life of Benton, and might have gone to Congress if he had not over-cultivated the pomposity of manner that has usually been ascribed to Missouri’s great senator.

“Has De Courcey formally announced himself as a candidate?” Chatterton asked.

“Yes, as a candidate for the Democratic nomination,” replied the student of politics. “He told me so himself this morning.”

"Do you think he will get it, Mr. Kavanagh?" asked Genevieve, Kentuckian enough to be interested in the subject.

"Well, yes, I think he will," Mr. Kavanagh replied, with his usually important air. "From inside information, Mrs. Greystone, I am confident that he has the nomination in his hand. He would not have announced his candidacy if he had not been promised the nomination beforehand."

"Do you think he will be elected?" queried Mr. Vincent, who had a son whose appointment to West Point he wished to secure.

"Yes; I don't think there is any doubt about it," Kavanagh replied. "There is a big manufacturing section in the district, and the laboring classes are naturally Democratic. Of course, we don't know yet who they'll put up on the other side. There is really a scarcity of the right kind of material. The only chance of the Republican party is to nominate some man who combines wealth, ability and the sympathy of the riff-raff."

"A rare combination," quoth Chatterton.

"It will take money to get the Republican nomination," continued Kavanagh, "and it will take ability to reconcile the party platform with the interests of the laboring people—so much ability that no man could do it who was not of them and from them."

"I am glad that Ernest de Courcey's prospects are so good," said his forty-second cousin from the head of the table. "I believe there are fewer gentlemen in politics every year. I remember the time when it was exceptional for any man other than a gentleman to be elected to Congress."

"How old is this De Courcey?" asked John Greystone.

"Thirty-three years old," answered Mr. Kavanagh, whose political studies included even such minute details as the ages of local politicians.

"Has he any particular qualifications for the position of Congressman?" John asked, gravely.

"He is just as generous as he can be," remarked Mrs. Vincent, mentally contemplating Master Gaskill Wesley Vincent, Jr., in the full regalia of a West Point cadet.

"He is very handsome," said Miss Emilie Moulton, a tall blonde, who was seated between Kavanagh and Mr. Vincent.

"He must be awfully clever," said little Miss Inosent. "Papa won't ever have him for a partner at whist. He says that his mind is so full of important matters that he trumps his partner's trick half the time."

A smile went around the table, and Papa Inosent, who was present, came very near commit-

ting suicide by suffocation in his efforts to refrain from open laughter at the naïve rendition of his recent eulogy of the Honorable Ernest de Courcey in the role of a whist-player.

“He belongs to one of the best families in the State,” said the hostess, involuntarily elevating her head with the remark.

John, who had listened attentively to the encomiums of the future Congressman, turned toward Kavanagh with questioning glance, for that celebrated encyclopedia of political information had not yet replied to his inquiry relative to the especial qualifications of the candidate.

Thus challenged, Leslie Kavanagh, who had diplomatically reserved his answer until the others had spoken, gave voice to a portion of his store of knowledge. “I can heartily second everything that has been said of De Courcey,” he began. “He is very generous” (glancing at Mrs. Vincent as carelessly as if he did not know the motive that had prompted her compliment); “he is certainly handsome” (glancing at the fair-haired Emilie, as if her ambition might be worn where sleeve was not—on the well-rounded arm); “he undoubtedly is absent-minded at whist” (a glance at Papa Inosent that sent that stout gentleman to cover behind his champagne glass), “and he does belong to one of our best families” (a smile toward the hostess); “but it

is my own humble opinion, after a careful review of the political situation in this district, that all these qualifications combined could not secure him the nomination if he were not the son of Godfrey de Courcey, who was not only a Member of Congress at the time of his death, but was one of the most distinguished lawyers in the State."

"What a fine old gentleman he was," exclaimed Papa Inosent, retrospectively.

"A thorough aristocrat; a gentleman of the old school," echoed Leburn Mason, a studiously polite bachelor of forty winters, who had paid flowery compliments to Miss Lily Inosent, after having examined the city tax books with a view of becoming better acquainted with the financial standing of her indulgent papa.

"He was an aristocrat," Kavanagh assented, "but he enjoyed his prominence in the palmy days of the aristocracy, when Congressmen were gentlemen, as Mrs. Heighdecker has just informed us. The trouble is that Ernest is as much of an aristocrat at heart as even his father was, and it is possible that it may injure his prospects."

"How can the fact of his being a gentleman injure his prospects, Mr. Kavanagh?" queried Miss Emilie Moulton.

"Through the prejudice of the masses. I do

not say that it will injure him, only that it may. There is a blacksmith, at present a member of the city council, who probably has more influence with the laboring classes than any other one man in the district. Now, Nailor—his name is Nailor—claims to be a Democrat, but he is one of those rare plebeians who is proud of his plebeianism, and if he should become prejudiced against De Courcey on account of his social position, or if the Republican candidate should make it worth Nailor's while to prejudice the riff-raff against him, it would make his election anything but an easy matter. Of course, I do not anticipate defection on Nailor's part. I only mention it as a possibility, to illustrate to you how an attribute that was of decided advantage in the political arena twenty years ago is of very doubtful advantage at the present time."

Mr. Kavanagh, having fairly enlightened the minds of those about him on the momentous political subject, resumed his chicken salad with as much modesty as his pomposity would permit.

The brief lull that followed was broken by the hostess: "Have you heard Doctor Bartell preach?" she asked of Mr. Vincent, who affected religion, as he did side whiskers and lavender gloves, because he thought it was becoming.

"You mean the new minister? No, I have

not heard him. I was unfortunate enough to miss his first sermon last Sunday."

"*On dit* that he is young and handsome and a bachelor," said Genevieve; "and that he is going to put a stop to scandal, round dances and flirtations."

"Query—Can he do it?" said Mr. Chatterton, glancing at the splendid figure of the fair Emilie. "Do you think he will make a convert of you, Miss Moulton?"

"If he is very handsome, he might induce me to forswear gossip and flirting. I don't care much for gossip, and, you know, I can't flirt" (with a downward droop of the darkened lashes), "but I draw the line at dancing. I would rather waltz than do anything else in the world."

"Well, you will have a long time to reconsider your decision," said Chatterton. "He is going to make all the matrons stop dancing before he begins on the maids. What do you think of that, Mrs. Greystone?"

"*'Honi soit qui mal y pense,'*" said Genevieve, with a gleam in the brown eyes. "I don't see the least harm in waltzing, and until I do I have no intention of giving it up. If it were only leap year, I should ask the Rev. Doctor Bartell for the pleasure of a turn or two the first opportunity."

"You actually grow worse as you grow older,

my dear," said Mrs. Heighdecker, laughingly, for the old lady herself had certainly not grown any better with the many sunny years that had passed over her head. "You really need reforming, and I am going to take you with me to hear Doctor Bartell next Sunday."

"He is to discourse on love marriages, and it will be in the nature of a penance for your early mutiny," quoth Chatterton.

There was another brief lull in the conversation; then the hostess rose, and presently the gentlemen were left alone over their wine and cigars. When they resumed their seats, John took a chair next to Kavanagh, and they were soon so deeply interested in their own conversation that the others had become almost oblivious of their presence. All at once John's attention was attracted by a few careless words uttered by Seyton about round dancing, and the delightful opportunity it afforded for embracing the fair sex. "It just illustrates the force of custom," he concluded. "I haven't a doubt that if it was fashionable for women to kiss their partners during the dance they would do it just as gracefully as they surrender their waists to our keeping now. Long may they dance—matrons and maids."

During the drive home that evening John was less taciturn than was his wont, and Genevieve

noticed the faint glimmer of a smile about the firm lips as they passed under the light of a street lamp. "I told Mrs. Inosent this evening that we would be at her party next Wednesday," she remarked. "I believe you said that you wanted to go."

"Yes; but I have changed my mind."

"You have no objection to my going?"

"None at all, if you don't dance," he said.

"If I don't dance?" she repeated. "Why, it is a dancing party. I promised Mr. Seyton the first waltz this evening. You have never objected to my dancing before, and papa and mamma never did either. I think *they* know what is *comme il faut*, and what is not."

"I don't understand your French words," said John, coldly. "I do object to your dancing round dances. I forbid it."

Genevieve did not reply, but she felt her temples throb, and she beat the cushion nervously with her gloved hand. And when they reached home at last, and he offered to assist her from the carriage, she turned her face from him haughtily, and passed up the broad stairs without a word.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PEOPLE'S CANDIDATE.

Two weeks after the dinner party at Mrs. Heighdecker's, John Greystone announced himself as a candidate for Congress from the St. Louis district, on the regular Republican ticket. There had been but little trouble in winning the support of the practical politicians who controlled the nominating convention. There had been no dearth of aspirants for the nomination, but none of them possessed the wealth of the new-comer, and shrewd politicians had predicted the certainty of Ernest de Courcey's election before the millionaire entered the race. Even with the wealth that it was supposed John Greystone would spend lavishly, the party leaders were generally of the opinion that his fight would be a losing one, which lessened the difficulty in making adherents out of his more formidable rivals before the convention.

But the labor reformer's earnest efforts for co-operation had not fallen upon sterile soil, and the wild enthusiasm that his name created at the mass-meeting held by the "Order of United Workingmen," the evening after the nomination, made him a formidable rival of De Courcey at the start. As for Kavanagh, that animated

encyclopedia of political information had grasped the opportunity of his life-time, and had gone over at once to swell the Republican ranks. The skeptic who would criticise his sudden defection should have heard his pompous declaration to Mr. Vincent when buttonholed by that disinterested gentleman a few days after the Republican convention.

"You cannot blame me, my dear sir," he said. "You might as readily expect a father to oppose his own son as for Leslie Kavanagh to oppose John Greystone." Then, in response to the elevation of Mr. Vincent's eyebrows at the paternal position that he had assumed, he continued: "Why, my dear sir, the candidate is my own creation. He never would have run if it had not been for me. I suggested it, I urged it, I demanded it in the interest of my fellow-citizens."

"Do you think he will be elected?" asked the gentleman with a son.

"Do I think it?" Kavanagh smiled benignly. "I am perfectly confident of it, sir."

"Well! well! You do seem confident of it. And I believe he is a good man."

"The people believe it, and they will prove their belief at the polls, sir."

"It will be close, though; close either way," said Mr. Vincent. "Of course I have always

voted with the Democratic party heretofore, but you have, too, for that matter, Leslie. There are new planks in the platforms, too. Times change. Issues change. You know I have some little influence, and I have not pledged myself yet." He changed his cane from the right hand to the left as easily as if it had been his political opinion. "Oh, by the way, do you know whether Greystone has promised the appointment to West Point?"

"Yes. He promised it last evening, in his speech before the United Order of Workingmen—to the boy who shall pass the highest competitive examination."

It was a little thing to have offered to the sturdy toilers—that their sons should have an equal chance with the proudest aristocrats in the city for the always coveted appointment to the United States Military Academy. It was a little thing, but it was "good politics," as one of the bosses had declared at the time, and it was worth a thousand votes to John Greystone.

At the conclusion of the announcement, which was all his own, for he had not consulted with his political workers on the subject, he said, with characteristic earnestness: "Though the chances of all will be equal, I hope with all my heart that the son of some workman here present will win the prize."

As the days went by, he did his utmost to convince the laboring element that he had their interest at heart. He knew, and the older politicians, who held so many secret conclaves behind the closed doors of his library, knew that the district was naturally a Democratic one; they knew that the middle classes would vote generally as they had voted, and that their one chance of success lay in swaying the thousands of voters who made up the laboring classes in the great manufacturing city. To the politicians it was a fine political maneuver; to John Grey-stone it was a great struggle for right. He believed himself a Republican from principle. As a boy, during the war, with but little knowledge of the real grounds of difference between the two great parties, he had hated the Democracy because he had deemed it the party of slavery, and he was ever keenly alive to the sufferings of man or beast. Slavery abolished, the intensity of his feelings had subsided, and, though he had voted the Republican ticket when he had voted at all, his busy life and its one engrossing object—Dead Sea fruit now—had crowded out any tendency to active partisanship. From the lights of his reason he believed that Republicanism was the better party of the two; but from the depths of his heart he believed in the rights—aye, and in the wrongs—of the common peo-

ple; above either party, above both parties, above all other interests he held the interests of the common people. He was their champion—his birthright was their leadership. Yet he felt that if he should fail in the end, if they should vote against him after all, he would not blame them. As well blame a people who failed to see a prophet in the stranger who opened not their eyes. In the memory of his own dense ignorance, he felt only pity for the ignorance of his people, and had no heart for blame.

The excitement of the contest was a perfect boon to him, and his energy, his unflagging interest in every detail of the campaign, excited the surprise of the politicians; who had looked forward to having the manipulation of affairs entirely in their own hands. They had naturally supposed that a man of Greystone's wealth would be glad to shirk the worry that the active management of the campaign would entail. But they were mistaken. He held the reins from the start, and the purse strings, and, though he spent money freely, there was no questionable transactions to which he was a party, not one which he would have hidden from the world. Handbills, banners, advertisements of every kind and description, endless torch-light processions, daily barbecues and nightly banquets were paid for without a murmur, but buying of votes,

by any more direct method than a succulent appeal to the inner man of the voter, there was none.

A covert suggestion as to the purchase of one of De Courcey's henchmen, who controlled some three or four hundred votes, was met with a stern rebuke by the millionaire. His attitude was due not more to his plain allegiance to the right than to a personal pride in his untainted integrity. In his bitterness against the class into which he had married, and by many members of which he felt himself tolerated only, there was one point on which he knew that not the proudest could take precedence of him, and that was his honesty. He had enjoyed keenly Kavanagh's amusing account of the covert treachery of the sleek Vincent, who had boasted of his family connections for twenty years; and there was a grim satisfaction in the knowledge that Noel Fitzhugh, the supposed pink of chivalry, the learned exponent of blood and lineage, the father of Genevieve, was a humbug, destitute of honor.

During the busy weeks that followed the announcement of his candidacy, Genevieve had seen less of her husband than at any period of their married life. He was up and away early in the mornings, and seldom returned home until late at night. If he did, it was only to

closet himself in the library with his campaign associates. On the rare occasions when they came together he was even more reticent than usual, and apparently absorbed in the Congressional struggle. That she occupied a secondary position in his thoughts to his Congressional aspirations, she never doubted, and she sometimes wondered, wearily, if he had not tired of his purchase of her. He had given up all social pleasures temporarily, and when she went out to evening entertainments, it was generally with Mrs. Heighdecker. That frivolous old lady, strange to say, was a stanch admirer of John Greystone, and had sung his praises into every ear that would listen since the first hour of his candidacy.

"I'm glad I am not a man, my dear," she would say, "for if I were, I would be sorely tempted to vote against my own blood. De Courcey is a sort of forty-second cousin of mine, you know."

To her, and her only, in the strictest confidence, Genevieve had confided the fiat against her dancing, in the early flush of her indignation. The old lady had not concealed her surprise at the information, but she proved a wise counselor.

"What would you do?" Genevieve had asked in conclusion, two angry red spots burning in her cheeks.

“Why, my dear, I would not dance,” said Mrs. Heighdecker. “Little differences will come up even in love matches, but you must not allow them to remain differences. John has heard some remarks about waltzing, and he has taken a prejudice against it. Well, dear, humor the prejudice. You have everything else you want, and, though I acknowledge that his prejudice is ridiculous, it would be foolish to oppose it. Try and interest yourself in his interests. I am a silly old woman who say it, but you cannot be thoroughly happy unless you do.”

Genevieve took the words to heart, and refrained from round dancing. But how could she foster that interest in her husband that her mentor advised? If the latter had only known all! Even if she could bring herself to care for him, would it be wise to do so with the knowledge that she was utterly indifferent to him; with the bitter memory of that first night; with the humiliating thought that he despised her? Opposed to her youthful beauty, her matchless voice, all her woman’s capability of forgiving and loving, was the echo and re-echo of his scathing denunciation on that night. She believed at times that he hated her. She knew that she had hated him, and that she did not now—that the feeling of hatred had departed the day that she had seen the tenderness in his

eyes when he had stooped to rescue the caterpillar.

The prospective proposal of the West Point cadetship was not the only unexpected maneuver originated by the Republican candidate during the short and exciting contest in which he was one of the central figures. The campaign had been in progress some weeks, and both parties were straining every nerve for the victory. John Greystone had made a score of speeches, generally consisting of half-hour harangues, plain and to the point, as void of rhetorical flourish as was the speaker's scarred face of beauty—speeches in striking contrast with the lengthy oratorical flights of the cultured Enrest de Courcey.

Late one night a group of four earnest men were gathered about the table in John's library, which had been turned into a bivouac where the political generals held frequent rendezvous. Social prestige was of small moment at these meetings, where Pat Cleary, a favorite leader of the sons of Erin; Heinrich Unterburger, the local boss of the German contingent; the political encyclopedia, known in polite circles as Mr. Leslie Kavanagh, and John Greystone formulated and discussed the most important plans of the campaigns. The two practical politicians had presented the results of a preliminary can-

vass of the voters in several close precincts, wher. John's attention was attracted by a half-page portrait of Ernest de Courcey in the *Daily Ledger*, a newspaper favorable to the opposition. An idea suddenly occurred to him. "Leslie," he said, turning toward his factotum, "don't you think I could buy a page in the *Ledger* to print my photograph on?" he asked.

"In the *Ledger*?" queried the encyclopedia, his incredulous glance reflected on the faces of his companions.

"Yes, to be sure, in the *Ledger*," asserted Greystone. "Why not?"

"It would be poor politics for the *Ledger*," said Cleary, bluntly.

"They might just as well turn in and support you," said the Teuton.

"Not at all. There must be advertising columns for sale in the *Ledger*, and I propose to buy some of them."

"To plant our flag inside the enemy's wall!" exclaimed Kavanagh, bursting into metaphor over the audacious proposition.

"It would not be practicable," remarked Cleary.

"They couldn't afford to do it for five thousand dollars," said Unterburger.

"Offer them ten thousand, then," said John. Ten thousand dollars! It was the entire two

years' salary of a Congressman. Cleary and Unterburger were silent, but Kavanagh inflated his chest and his eyes twinkled. "They'll do it for that, I know," he said. "They need money. Flicker told me so, confidentially, a month ago. Leave it to Kavanagh, and he'll fix it for you."

And he did. On the morrow, the fateful election day, the *Ledger* made its appearance with a column editorial devoted to the remarkable merits of the regular Democratic nominee for Congress, but on the last page of that partisan journal was a life-like portrait of John Greystone, and under it the legend: "The People's Champion." The novel audacity of the adroit maneuver tickled the populace. It changed scores of votes and sold thousands of papers. Cleary and Unterburger scattered the copies broadcast among the voters, and the *Blazer*—a fiery Democratic sheet—got out an extra edition declaring that the *Ledger* had come out squarely in support of the Republican candidate. Of course there was a libel suit afterward, but what of that? John Greystone was elected by one hundred and twenty-seven votes.

The polls closed at sundown, but the election was a close one, and it was late that night before the result was definitely known at campaign headquarters. It was later still when he arrived home and dismissed his hackman at the front

gate. Himself unnoticed in the darkness, he saw a carriage emerge from the gateway, and among the several occupants he recognized Mrs. Heighdecker and Miss Inosent. Framed in the doorway, he could see his wife, a fair picture, with a smile on her face; and a gentleman who had just bidden her good-by he recognized as Seyton. The latter had reiterated to her that her husband would be in the next Congress, and she had smiled at some courteous compliment that he had paid on her own adaptability for the gay social life of the capital. But how was John Greystone to know that? How was the lonely man—who found his wife happiest in his absence, apparently careless of all save her social pleasures on the very eve of his triumph or defeat—to know that the glad smile with which she welcomed him was one of heartfelt congratulation. How was he to interpret the wistful silence, the trembling of the sensitive lips that followed his short remark that “the details would be in all the papers to-morrow.”

CHAPTER V.

A THANKSGIVING DINNER.

NOVEMBER had come again. Another year had passed over the wedded life of John Grey-

stone and Genevieve Fitzhugh, and the papers had duly announced the early departure of the Congressman-elect for the national capital.

The twelve long months had not changed the relations between husband and wife. Reticent, austere, implacable, John Greystone trod his own thorny path alone. He gave less time to social pleasure than before his election, and was fain to acknowledge the unadaptability of his tastes and disposition to the gay world of fashion in which he had once wished to shine. Wealth could open its doors—he had proved that—but he was forced to acknowledge, doggedly, that it could not create the capacity for enjoyment. It fell short there, as weak as poverty. Forced at last on his own resources, he turned his active mind to the world of books, and, alone in his study, pored over them until late into the night.

As for Genevieve, wearied with her empty life and sated with its pleasures, she had, in very desperation, tried to follow the advice of Mrs. Heighdecker and interest herself in the interests of her husband. But her efforts were futile, and her timid advances were repulsed by the stony imperturbability of his demeanor. Yet beneath his austerity she had caught brief glimpses of kindness; never for herself—there seemed not one spark of tenderness in his nature for her—but for others. She had been ill once

for several weeks, but, though she had every luxury and attention that could be secured, he never so much as sent a message to her during all the days that she lay upon her bed of pain. And yet she knew that he had visited sick-beds among his operatives and had held the hand of Jim Stubbs' little boy when he died. When she went downstairs again she had tried to sing one of his old songs, and, somehow, for she was weak, the tears would come, and her voice broke down—but he only left the room.

With her own people things had not gone well. The fabulous coal mines had proved the veriest delusion, and Judge Fitzhugh, as was natural to him, had frittered away most of the competence that he had received from John. She had an idea that the boys were maintained at college by John, though he had not spoken of it.

Before the world, before her husband, except on the few occasions of the humiliating advances that he had repulsed, Genevieve was always the same indifferent woman. Beautiful, haughty, hardened—almost imperceptibly in the eyes of others, irretrievably in her own eyes—she played her part, wishing at one time that she could hate her husband, striving at another toward indifference; regretting always—with the despair that painted every coming year more darkly—

the monstrous wrong that she had inflicted upon them both.

It was Thanksgiving day, the evening before the departure of John Greystone for Washington. His arrangements for going were completed. The personal supervision of "The Great Western Iron Works" was to be left to his efficient foreman, Jim Stubbs. An elaborate establishment had already been provided in Washington, and the St. Louis mansion was to be closed the following week, when Mrs. Greystone expected to join him. He had donated a Thanksgiving dinner to his numerous employés, and had promised to deliver a farewell speech to them in the town hall after the banquet. Genevieve knew all this because she had read it in the *Blazer*. And her own Thanksgiving dinner was to be eaten alone; not necessarily, for she had refused more than one invitation to dine out—but then she had only learned that morning that John would be absent from home.

She had never heard him deliver a speech, and she found herself wondering vaguely what he would say to the thousand grimy men that she had seen about the furnaces in her visits to Irontown. She glanced at the newspaper again and saw that it was to be a non-political speech. She became possessed of a wild desire to hear the speech—whether prompted by a shrinking

from her own loneliness, or the natural tendency of wearied thoughts to a novelty, or some other indefinable cause, she did not attempt to discover. The impulse was strong upon her, and she gave way to it. She ordered the carriage, and, hastily arraying herself in the most subdued dress in her wardrobe, she veiled her face heavily, and was soon on her way to Irontown. She passed the town hall, where she saw a crowd of rough-looking men about the entrance and several women in cheap Sunday attire among them. A short distance beyond she stopped the vehicle, and, murmuring something about having to see a sick woman, she directed the coachman to wait until her return, and retraced her way toward the hall. She felt guilty enough, and dared not think of the possibility of meeting her husband. She was glad there would be women present—she had not thought of that before. She was confident that John would not recognize her veiled face among the crowd where he could have no expectation of seeing it, and thought that she would just stand near the door a few minutes in the darkest corner she could find, and then hasten back to her carriage and home. Passing through the crowd at the entrance without exciting any special notice, she made her way to a position deep in the shade behind a wooden pillar that supported a gallery

at one end of the hall. She felt herself trembling at the novelty of her position, and was fearful that she might have attracted attention toward herself; but, no; thanks to the brown veil and the interest of the audience, she remained unnoticed. She recognized something familiar in the clear, earnest tones that reached her ears, and, glancing timidly from behind the pillar, she could see John; one hand deep in his trousers pocket, the other emphasizing his remarks with varied gesticulation. His straight, unruly hair was tossed and rumpled, his coat-sleeves were pulled away from the thick wrists and broad red hands, and his cravat was all awry. It was some minutes before she could catch the drift of his remarks, which at first seemed like a confused jumble of words relating to workmen's rights, the tariff, co-operative labor and kindred subjects that she knew nothing about. Then the words and sentences assumed more definite form, and she knew that he was speaking not only to, but for the common herd around her. His force, his eloquence, surprised her. There were occasional grammatical errors, there were inelegant Westernisms, but she did not observe them. She had seen him awkwardly pause, in his own parlors, to find words to express his meaning, and his ready use of effective language now was a reve-

lation to her. She felt her pulses thrill at the frequent cheers that interrupted him. One broad-shouldered, thick-necked fellow shouted, "Hear! Hear!" after all others had ceased, and another man, anxious to hear the remarks of the speaker, admonished him to silence, saying, "Sh! Nailor."

The name was familiar to her, and she looked at the man curiously, trying to place him in her thoughts. Mrs. Heighdecker's dinner party suddenly appeared before her mental vision. It must be the blacksmith, Nailor, the Democratic councilman Kavanagh had spoken of that evening. Democrat or Republican, he was cheering for her husband now. Again she directed her attention to the words of the latter.

"As I said in my speech of acceptance before the nominating convention, as I have said repeatedly since then, I say now, that in the House of Representatives I shall vote for every measure that I believe beneficial to the laboring man, and as often as the Republican party votes against such a measure just so often shall I vote against the Republican party. And to this I do solemnly pledge myself. But this was to be, not a political, but a farewell speech. When I leave St. Louis to-morrow I will leave behind me—though but temporarily—the dearest object that my life holds, in the co-operative system

that I have organized among you, and the many advantages of which I have but just now shown. On this Thanksgiving day there is nothing for which I feel so thankful as the success of this co-operative system. Some of you may smile at this assertion. Those of you who do not know me may doubt its sincerity. Why? Because you ignorantly think that wealth can buy so many pleasures greater than the satisfaction I have derived from my labors here. My friends, the purchasing power of money is limited. [The speaker's voice sank lower with suppressed emotion.] It cannot buy happiness. Every man of you who is well and strong; every man of you who has won the love of the woman he calls wife; every man of you who can look upon your likeness in the face of a little child, has more to be thankful for this day than many a man who counts his millions. All over yonder city, throughout our great country, the rich man who thanks God to-day, thanks Him first for the self-same blessings that you enjoy—for the peace of his domestic hearth, for the love of his wife, for the being of his children. And whether it be in our own dear land or at the uttermost ends of the earth; whether the wretch be rich or poor, God help the man who goes home this night to a loveless wife and a childless marriage-bed."

There were many moist eyes in the hall, and an impressive silence among the listeners followed his remarks, a silence so profound that, when he descended from the platform, forcing a smile to mask the sadness that had swept over his heart, a choking sob was heard at the end of the hall as the door closed upon the figure of a veiled woman.

CHAPTER VI.

AT THE NATION'S CAPITAL.

THERE were few Congressmen whose establishments at the national capital could have rivaled that of the new member from St. Louis, and there was not one that boasted so beautiful a mistress as Genevieve Greystone. They entertained as lavishly in their new residence as in the old, and Genevieve was at once accorded a prominent position in the social world. New acquaintances, new scenes, the constant spirit of gayety that permeated the higher official circles of society, stilled for a time the restless craving of her nature. But only for a time. Only the merest semblance of friendship united the new ties that she formed, and, even after a dozen parties, her life felt strangely new to her.

“It is the changing nature of the population,”

said Leslie Kavanagh, who had accepted the position of secretary to the new Congressman, and who had never felt more in his element.

"But it has not changed perceptibly in two months," Genevieve protested.

"No; and yet the French Minister has been recalled, and my Chinese friend, One-lung Hung, has been transferred to Great Britain."

"The French Minister was unintelligibly charming, and poor little Hung was charmingly unintelligible; but that does not explain what I mean. I do not think I can define it exactly. It is the utter lack of sympathy, sincerity, or even interest, felt by any of us for the others. I could name twenty people in St. Louis that I am sure would remember me, and be really glad to see me in ten years from now. I think it would be a sacrifice to vanity to claim any such friends here."

"That is because you would not find them here at all in ten years," said Mr. Kavanagh. "Twenty years from now, in St. Louis, you will find the same people you left two months ago, and forty years from now you will find their children. There will be an entirely new set in Washington in ten years, and the people who are here now know it. Two years hence half the people that we met at the White House crush last evening will have drifted back to different

parts of the country and different parts of the world, and the people they meet here are regarded by them in the light of traveling acquaintances. Of course, there is a small minority that is here always. Senator Redmund, Senator Eagan, General Amar, Secretary Baine and Senator Oscoe were here before the war, and if I return here in ten years—you know I have Congressional aspirations, Mrs. Greystone—I should be surprised not to find them all here still.”

“I suppose it is the constant change that makes people so different here,” Genevieve assented, wearily. “So you think of running for Congress some day?”

Leslie Kavanagh straightened himself before replying. “Yes, I do not really know why I should not,” he said. “I think that if I had made the effort I might have been in Congress before this. But I believe in the office seeking the man. I could not seek an office.” He rose and bowed as a distinguished Senator advanced, for the conversation just recorded had taken place at a party given by the Secretary of State, and Genevieve had promised a promenade to the Senator. She had not waltzed since the memorable dinner party at Mrs. Heighdecker’s.

Later in the evening she found herself again at the side of Leslie Kavanagh. Champagne

had flowed generously during the evening, and that gentleman, who had heard that the great Benton was addicted to his cups, had imbibed rather freely; just enough to have loosened his tongue and blinded his discretion.

“Do you know that I am very fond of your husband, Mrs. Greystone?” he said, interrogatively.

“Yes? I have no doubt it is mutual. I have heard him speak highly of you,” she replied.

“That is quite natural, quite natural. I helped him materially in the late race. I managed the campaign for him. I had his picture printed in the *Ledger*. I fixed Nailor. And now that it is all over, I sometimes think it would have been better for Mr. Greystone if he had not come to Washington.”

“Why?” queried Genevieve.

“I don’t know that I ought to tell you, but he is interesting himself in too many things. He got caught in a Kansas land scheme a month after he came here, and it cost him all of a hundred thousand. The election cost him pretty heavily—legitimate expenses, of course—and he has been dabbling in New York stocks. He has gotten in with a New York crowd here, and they have turned his head. They have some big scheme on hand now by which they expect to manipulate the stock market and make mil-

lions. They are all richer men than he is, and if he goes into it at all, he will have to go in heavily. He spoke yesterday of mortgaging the iron works. He ought not to do it, but he laughed at me when I told him so. I thought you might be able to influence him, and that is the reason I told you. I'm very fond of Mr. Greystone."

"But what can I do?" asked Genevieve, helplessly.

"I don't know," he answered. "You might ask him not to mortgage the works, though. Men will listen to their wives sometimes when they won't listen to any one else. That is, if they have been properly disciplined, you know" (with a smile).

And at that moment the subject of their conversation, who had been detained at a night session of Congress, approached the couple with a fellow-member.

John nervously plunged into a discussion with Kavanagh relative to some business project, and Hon. Joshua Stubblefield, who rightly thought Mrs. Greystone the most beautiful creature he had ever seen, took advantage of the situation and marched off with her in triumph.

An hour later she and her husband, on their way home, were sitting silently side by side in the carriage. Intervals of silence were frequent

between them. Generally, when they were alone together, John answered only in monosyllables, and the burden of conversation fell upon the tactful society woman. Often she had borne it merely because she thought it well-bred; of late, because she dreaded that in those long silences the stern man might drift further beyond her reach; and her opportunities were so few, even for interesting him, that she dared not neglect them. But to-night the silence remained unbroken longer than usual. She glanced furtively at the frown on his brow and knew that he was worried. She was fearful of offending him, and yet she had determined to speak to him of the prospective mortgage on the iron works. She did not hope that anything she could say would influence him, but it would show him that she had his interests at heart; it might bring her nearer to him, and it was an effort in the right direction. It was not easy, for they were very far apart. It was not until they reached home that she turned toward him and said desperately: "Mr. Kavanagh told me this evening that you thought of mortgaging the iron works." He did not reply, and she felt the awkwardness of her position, but made one more effort, and asked, feebly, "Do you think it is best?"

He turned and looked at her intently, and the scorn in his eyes sent the blood rushing to her

temples. "You will be provided for," he said. "I settled the St. Louis house on you to-day. Good-night." And he turned abruptly and left her.

CHAPTER VII.

AUNT TILDAH CHANGES HER ABODE.

LATE in the winter there appeared on the register of Willard's Hotel the names of three old acquaintances. So large, so pompously rounded were the letters of each that they occupied six lines on the page instead of three; and the newspaper reporter, on his daily rounds, was attracted by their assertive rotundity, and placed in their proper position at the head of his list of hotel arrivals the names of "Noel Fitzhugh, Mrs. Noel Fitzhugh, Miss Matilda Fitzhugh."

The party had stopped at the capital on their return home from New York, where Noel Fitzhugh had gone with the double intention of placing some securities controlled by a Southern syndicate and having his sister examined by a distinguished specialist. For Matilda Fitzhugh's malady had grown constantly worse. The shadowy hand that had stretched in at her window night after night had left its mark upon the failing limbs; the slight hands that it had clasped were tremulous and cold upon the

warmest days; the chest had shrunk beneath its weight, and the lips that it had touched were blue; the hands had smoothed her brow with its fantastic fingers, and the woman's brain had weakened beneath its blighting caresses.

There was but little change in Judge Noel Fitzhugh. That steadfast disciple of blood was as courtly, as fastidious, as verbose as in bygone days. The election of his son-in-law to Congress had been accepted as an additional feather in his own cap, or, rather, in the tiara of the Fitzhughs. "It is impossible, sir, to exaggerate the influence of an intellectual woman over the husband whose interests she has espoused," were words that he had uttered oracularly on more than one convenient occasion. "What would the great Disraeli be if it were not for the devoted woman he calls wife? What would our own Andy Johnson be, sir, if it were not for the estimable woman who taught him his letters after their marriage? There are men in Congress to-day, sir, who owe their positions to their wives, sir."

He saw his daughter in the full enjoyment of all that he had promised to lure the sacrifice of her girlhood, and was naturally gratified. In the capital of the nation his daughter, who might have been the wife of some debt-ridden Southern planter, had she possessed a less solici-

tous parent, was rich and courted. The Fitzhugh blood rolled in its carriage and dwelt in its palace, and things were as they should be. The boys would be well started a little later on. Less to ingratitude than to youthful thoughtlessness did he attribute her failure to throw her fair arms about his neck and thank him for the manifold blessings that she enjoyed. And Mrs. Fitzhugh, ever mindful of his peace of mind, said nothing to enlighten him. For Mrs. Fitzhugh had her doubts and misgivings. There were discordant notes in Genevieve's laughter, and the mother's yearning intuition told her that the bright eyes were not strangers to tears. But she could do nothing, even her efforts to win her daughter's confidence having proved unavailing. John Greystone's habitual coldness surprised her, but, making her wish parent to the thought, she attributed it to the cares of his public duties, and, besides, she had never been able to understand people of John's class. But he was not only different from men that she had hitherto known; he was different from himself, from the other self whose awkward ardor she had laughed at in the early days of his courtship. She wondered in vague terror if it could be possible that the man had outgrown his love for his wife. But the supposition was too absurd to be considered seriously. If Genevieve had been homely,

unattractive, dull, he might have tired of her, but no man, whatever the quality of his blood, could tire of Genevieve Greystone. The thought was preposterous.

As for John's manners, even so severe a critic as Judge Noel Fitzhugh acknowledged that they had improved. "There is a little self-consciousness apparent at times," he said, "but Genevieve has accomplished wonders. I think he might go almost anywhere now without having his manners commented on."

"Do you find him changed in any other respect, Noel?" asked his wife.

"Well, yes, I think he is more reserved than he was. I suppose his mind is a good deal preoccupied with Congressional and business affairs. He is a young man for the position he holds."

"He looks twenty years older than Genevieve," said Mrs. Fitzhugh.

"He does look old," her husband assented. "He always addresses you as Mrs. Fitzhugh, does he not?"

"Yes."

"I think the man still feels his position at times, and his modesty is commendable, but on the whole I think—don't you think?—you know he is Genevieve's husband—that it would be best for you to ask him to call you 'mother'?"

"I have asked him—I asked him the first opportunity I had after our arrival. Genevieve was with us."

"Well? What did he say?"

"He didn't say anything. He just looked at me. He didn't appear embarrassed, but I suppose he must have been. Genevieve came to the rescue with some droll remark about the political aspirations of Leslie Kavanagh."

"He has not called you 'mother' since then?"

"No; he has invariably addressed me as 'Mrs. Fitzhugh.' "

"What do you think he asked me this morning?" queried the Judge.

"I am sure I cannot guess," she answered.

"He asked me to let Tildah stay here with them. I can't imagine why he wants her, but there was no doubt of his earnestness. I asked him what prompted the request, and he answered candidly that she asked him to do it. He hastened to add, though, that he really wanted her. I am at a loss what to do about it."

"You have not spoken to Tildah?"

"Yes. She must have overheard us" (Noel Fitzhugh would have accused no woman in the world of listening), "for she burst into the room suddenly and announced her intention to remain. You know the physicians here and in New York

have insisted that she must not be crossed under any circumstances."

"Yes, I know. Poor Tildah! It would be a great relief to you, Noel. She makes it very hard for you at home."

"Yes, she hates me more bitterly every day. She has never forgiven me for sending that man West away."

"Have you ever heard of West since?"

Judge Fitzhugh coughed, and answered indirectly: "Tildah has never received a line from him. I have thought sometimes that the man was dead."

"And yet Tildah expects always that he will return," remarked Mrs. Fitzhugh.

"Strange steadfastness of faith! It is the only thing in which Tildah has not changed," said the Judge. "That and her hatred of me," he added, bitterly.

So it was decided that the stricken lady should remain in the home of John Greystone, and she did not accompany Judge and Mrs. Fitzhugh when they departed for Kentucky, a few days after the conversation just recorded. Mr. and Mrs. Greystone went with them to the depot, and in their hurried leave-taking the reader, too, must bid farewell to the great philosopher of refinement and propinquity who took up the gilt-edged scroll of life and read upon the title-page

that "blood was blood." Hard facts combated the theory at times—the rescue of his child by a ragged berry-picker, the love of his sister for an unknown telegraph operator, his own weakness in the matter of the sale of certain coal lands—but the student faltered not in his fealty to his motto. He had always cherished a lurking belief that it was the berry-picker who was first attacked by the dog, and defended himself naturally; the weakness of his sister's mind accounted for her fascination, and circumstances had made imperative the sacrifice of his coal lands. He always called the consideration for that fifty thousand dollars "coal lands," though the "coal lands" have never passed out of his own hands. Hard facts were combated and overcome, and at the end of the chapter, even as on the title-page, he read the motto: "Blood is blood."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

THE financial failure of John Greystone was not characterized by the suddenness with which great fortunes are so often lost. It was a shrinkage which began with the wild-cat Kansas land speculation disclosed by Kavanagh,

gained new force in the mortgage on the Great Western Iron Works drawn up some weeks after, and became irretrievable the day that stock in the Wabash Railway, the chief property in the Wall Street syndicate of which he was a member, dropped ten points. His losses were gradual enough for him to have drawn out with a comfortable remnant of his fortune, even after the decline just mentioned, and Kavanagh, who had been fleeced in his youth by the bulls and bears, and who feared Wall Street as he feared nothing else in the world, begged and pleaded with him to pocket his losses and withdraw that portion of the syndicate funds that still remained in his name. But Kavanagh might as well have attempted to argue with a stone wall (to use his own hopeless simile) as to turn John Greystone from the path he had taken. He felt that he had gone too far to retreat, and was too proud to draw out a loser. Besides, he had confidence in the plausible scheme of the syndicate, the possibilities of which, at least, were as brilliant as the probabilities had been. The fascination of stock gambling had won him as it had won thousands of men before, and as it has won thousands of men since. He had cast the die and he would stand by it.

But there were other troubles to bear during those last wretched weeks of the session. He

had been made chairman of the Labor Committee of the House, and a bill of importance to the laboring classes virtually depended on his recommendation or disapproval. Worried though he was, he investigated the subject thoroughly, and, according to his lights, deemed that the ultimate effects of its passage would be pernicious. The consequence was that his committee reported the bill unfavorably, and it was lost. He had kept his solemn pledge to the workmen, and had voted with the Democrats against the bill. The next morning a hundred journals of his own political faith denounced him as a renegade from his party, and a parvenu aristocrat who had taken the earliest opportunity to prove a traitor to the people from whom he had sprung. Labor unions throughout the land passed resolutions of condemnation against him, and even his own co-operative union repudiated the man they had elected, and publicly demanded his resignation. It was hard. John Greystone's most bitter enemy, knowing the struggle it had cost him to redeem his pledge in the disapproval of that bill, would have acknowledged that it was hard. And yet it was not the heaviest cross that John Greystone bore during those wretched days. The man who had tested the littleness of gold could bear its loss; knowing that he had done what he thought was right, he could bear

the unjust condemnation of those for whom he suffered; but there was nothing, nothing to lighten the burden of that other cross. For in those hours when he knew how little his motives were understood by others, when his whole nature craved encouragement and sympathy, when he groped wildly at times for one touch of a tender hand—in those hours, when he felt that the only encouragement, the only sympathy, the only tenderness for which he would have cared, were irretrievably lost to him—in those hours John Greystone learned to love his wife. As long as he had felt secure in his wealth, in his success, in the final fulfillment of his ambitious projects; as long as he had felt secure in his possession of her, and had not tested the emptiness of all other things (the utter, utter emptiness), he had steeled his heart against her and tried to believe that his great love was hatred. And why? Because she had sacrificed herself to save her parents. Now that the possibility of losing her was upon him; now that his forgiveness was unavailing, he knew how freely he forgave her. For there was a possibility of losing her. He had chained her with his wealth, only to taunt her in the golden chains, and now that they were broken, he dared not hope that she would voluntarily remain at his side. The idea was preposterous. He had not spoken one ten-

der word to her in all their married life. And now, now that he had nothing to offer but fallen fortunes and a blighted name—now he dared not even tell her how he loved her.

And this gold, this paltry stuff of whose purchasing power he had boasted so loudly; this gold that was better than gentle blood or refinement, or learning; this gold that could buy all things and make life worth the living, where was it and what was it now? If the downward movement in Wall Street was not checked, if the market did not turn, what then? He would be ruined, and he could not name one human being who would care. He had vaunted his gold, and he was nothing without it. The only class that he had really cared for execrated him. That other class that he had hated—his wife's class—would only laugh at him.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STORY OF A SCAR.

WHATEVER the fluctuations on the New York Stock Exchange; however many lambs were fleeced; whatever the shortage of crops, and however rapidly the cloud of disaster darkened over Wall Street, there was no dearth of gayety

in Washington, where the pleasure-seekers waver not in their eager chase while the season lasts. Whatever the cares of John Greystone; however the golden sands of wealth slipped through his loosened fingers, receptions, dinner-parties, balls, followed one upon the other with unseemly haste—and at receptions, dinner-parties and balls, wherever the court was gayest, wherever the race was swiftest, with the glamour of beauty and wealth and grace about her, the admired of all, the envied of many, was Genevieve Greystone. Mrs. Heighdecker had taken a furnished house on Massachusetts Avenue for the winter, and little Miss Inosent, under the watchful care of that experienced duenna, was spending her first season at the capital.

Genevieve usually attended evening entertainments with these two, sometimes returning home in their carriage, and less frequently in her own, accompanied by her husband, who would on rare occasion call for her on his way home from committee work or secret conclaves with the trio of capitalists in whose speculative transactions he had become so deeply interested. He had promised to call for the ladies, at a late hour on this particular evening, at the residence of the Secretary of the Interior, whose wife had distributed a thousand invitations to the swell ball of the season.

The first three or four dances on the programme had been satisfactorily performed by the throng of young people present; some score of youthful scions of greatness—intoxicated with the combined effects of the lights of bright eyes and chandeliers, the latest waltz and the last bottle of champagne—had fervently declared their undying devotion to as many gay damsels; Mrs. Heighdecker—who had actually carried her seventy summers through the mazes of a quadrille beside the seventy winters of Senator Blankington, who had wooed her a half century before—was still panting contentedly, when Genevieve, who had been entertaining a group of admiring foreign officials, of whom the French Minister was the most prominent, turned from the latter toward the Secretary of the Interior, who had just approached, accompanied by a stranger, a bronzed, gray-haired man of fifty, who was apparently not thoroughly at home in his splendid surroundings.

“Allow me to introduce Mr. West, Mrs. Greystone,” said the Secretary.

“I am charmed, I am sure,” said Genevieve affably, accepting the proffered hand of the bronzed gentleman, wondering at the earnest scrutiny of his gaze and the warm pressure of his clasp.

“Is your husband here this evening, Mrs.

Greystone?" asked the new arrival, the earnestness of whose gaze was unabated.

"He is not here yet," she replied. "He is detained at the House this evening, but I expect him before twelve o'clock."

"I am sorry he is not here now," said West; "I have come three thousand miles to see him—and— You have heard him speak of his old partner, Fred West?"

"Yes," said Genevieve, and turned toward the French Minister, who was already chafing at her attention to the stranger. "Count, I will have to ask you to excuse me from the lancers. I feel too tired. Mr. West, I am sure you would like to meet Mrs. Heighdecker; she is a particular friend of my husband's." And, taking West's arm, she left the group with a smile for the handsome Count—a smile in which he read a command, and did not follow her.

"*Va!* She will tire of him in a half hour," he muttered to himself, twisting his waxed moustache. "He is a barbarian, like her husband. And she is beautiful like an angel. I will wait."

"Tell me about John," Mr. West said, as soon as they were alone together in a quiet corner of the conservatory.

"You have not yet seen him, then?" she inquired.

"No, not yet. I only got in at five o'clock,

and went straight to the Capitol to find him, but he wasn't there. I met the Secretary, whom I knew on the coast when we couldn't have counted twenty gray hairs between us, or twenty dollars either, and he told me John would be here this evening. He invited me up, and, though I felt pretty well played out, I came; principally to see John—and you.” He looked at his watch furtively. “It wants another hour till twelve,” he said. “Tell me, is he well?”

“Yes.”

“And prosperous?”

“Ye—es.”

“And happy?”

There was an awkward little silence, and then he said: “I know I needn't have asked that.”

“Why?” she asked.

“Because, when a man loves a woman the way John Greystone loved you, he is calculated to be happy after he wins her, as I take it.”

“He must have spoken of me often, then,” she said, with a slight tremor in her voice. “Tell me what he used to say.”

“Just as if he hadn't told you himself a thousand times. Why, I never saw a man so much in love in my life as John was with you. He used to say that if he lived a thousand years it wouldn't be long enough for him to tell you how much he loved you. He never would talk of

anything else when we were alone, and if there were others in camp he'd just steal off by himself, way off, where he couldn't hear us, and stay away till the others had turned in. When he was a little chap it used to worry me, and I'd go out to look for him, afraid he might have fallen asleep somewhere; but I'd always find him wide awake, lying on his back and looking up at the sky. 'What on earth are you doing off here alone?' I'd ask him, and he'd answer back always the same: 'Just looking at the stars, Fred, and thinking of her.' I tried hard to break him of it, but it was no use; it couldn't have been done."

"Why did you want to?" she asked.

"That's the very last question I'd want to answer," he said, "but I'll tell you just why. I thought it was wearing on him to think so much about a little girl that the chances were he'd never see again. I didn't think it natural that any little girl in good circumstances would remember such a ragged tramp as John was when I found him; pretty much the same as he was when you first saw him, I reckon. It's all right now, and I can talk freely, because you proved true blue, and you've made him happy, and I own up that I was in the wrong and that the boy was right. But I thought differently then, and I used to argue with him and try to

shame him. At first, when he was little and couldn't argue back at me, I'd think sometimes I'd gotten the best of him. I'd try to make him say that he was foolish about it all. But he never wavered. 'If it's foolish to think of her, then I'd rather be foolish, that's all,' he'd say. The bigger he grew the more he thought of you and the more I worried about it. I told him there wasn't a woman in the world worth it; and I meant it, too, for, you see, I never guessed that you would wait for him—how could I? When I'd say you wasn't worth it, he'd swear you were worth every drop of blood he had and every ounce of gold on the coast. Well, he grew up so strong and ambitious, and always so confident of you, that I began to think a little better of it. When the flood came and he got that gash across the face, I thought then—"

"Tell me how he was hurt," Genevieve interrupted, with eager, tremulous lips.

"You don't mean to say he has never told you? But it is just like him. Well, it was this way. You see, we had been placer mining on the banks of the Kottawobba, and had been having extra good luck, so good that a gang of Greasers, that is Mexicans, came and located a claim just above ours. They were a mean set, and we had trouble with them from the start, and the meanest one of the whole lot was a fel-

low named Baccam. Well, one pitch-dark night we heard a fearful roaring and rushing of waters, and the next morning, when we woke up and went down to the bank, the creek was a foaming torrent, tearing along like fury, and so filled with trees and logs that a man's life wouldn't have been worth a copper cent in it, even if he'd been proof against drowning. We looked up and saw the Mexicans talking and motioning excitedly, all except Bacca, who was standing out by himself on a little headland that jutted into the river. The next instant he threw his hands up and yelled, and we saw the headland whirl about in the waters and disappear, and Bacca, his eyes standing out of their sockets, was struggling in the river. It meant death to him, for there wasn't but one man in the county who could have kept himself afloat in that water five minutes, and that man was John. There was a long coil of rope on the bank, and before I knew what had happened John had one end of it around him, and, yelling for me to grab the other end, he threw himself into the water just as Bacca swept by the spot where we stood. They were both carried down a hundred feet before John caught the Greaser, and then I began to pull them both in, the Mexicans running over to help me. We'd pulled them half way when I saw a big, heavy-limbed tree bearing

right down on them, and I called to John to let Bacca go. He saw it, too, but he only tightened his grip on the Greaser, and then the tree passed us and I saw a broken limb within a foot of John's head. I shut my eyes then, and when I opened them I knew it had struck him, for the water was bloody about him, and he looked like a dead man. He had a close call, but he pulled through, disfigured for life. I thought of that, and of how much girls—most girls—think of good looks, and I wished more than ever that he had let Bacca drown. I couldn't help asking him what on earth he did it for, and what do you think he said? 'I was thinking of her, Fred, and so I did it—she'd have wanted me to have done it.' " There was silence for some moments after he had ceased speaking, and Genevieve's eyes were turned toward the gay throng of dancers in the parlor. But her thoughts were far away, and she was picturing that scene of heroism in the wild waters of the Kottawobba. She was thinking of how cruelly she had misjudged him from the first; of how much he had suffered, and of the emptiness of his reward; she thought of his great love and how she had cast it aside. And this man who stood out before all other men, so noble, so grand, was lost to her for all time.

"You are not offended because I tried to make

John forget you?" West asked, uncomfortable under the silence.

"No, no," she said.

"I was wrong. I see that now. I owned it to myself the day he telegraphed me that he was married. You waited for him just as long as he waited for you, and I guess he's the happiest man in Washington to-day."

Genevieve rose, nervously. "Let us join Mrs. Heighdecker," she said. "You must meet her this evening." He had just been introduced to that social veteran, when John Greystone approached them, looking pale and careworn. His face lit up with a smile of other days when he saw Fred West and felt the old-time clasp of his hand.

"How long have you been in Washington? Why didn't you let me know you were coming?" he asked, with gentle reproach, still holding that loyal hand.

"Well, I wanted to surprise you, and, besides, you don't think I came three thousand miles to see you, do you? Not much, sir; I came on here expressly to see that little brown-eyed girl you used to talk so much about."

He looked smilingly from one to the other, but his pleasantry met with no response, for Genevieve became suddenly absorbed in something that Mrs. Heighdecker was saying, and

the glad light had faded out of John's eyes. And meanwhile that odd Mr. Chatterton, who had just finished a waltz with little Miss Inosent, thought it a proper time and place to relate to that young lady the sequel of his modern version of Beauty and the Beast, the story he had told at Mrs. Heighdecker's the evening that John and Genevieve were married. "If I didn't know that you never used powder, Miss Inosent, I'd hold you responsible for this white stuff on my coat," he said, with such apparent simplicity that the young lady addressed blushed charmingly in spite of the lily white that adorned her cheeks, calling forth a low-spoken compliment on her lovely complexion in consequence.

"Talking about complexions, have you forgotten the story about the Siwellativygob, the beautiful maiden, the beast, and the yellow sand?"

"Oh, no, indeed," she answered. "What became of the poor beast? Of course, he was transformed to a handsome prince, wasn't he?"

"Well, no, he was not," said Chatterton, who glanced toward John just as the hard look had come back into the latter's face, after West's playful reference to the little brown-eyed girl. "The story didn't end that way at all. After the beautiful maiden had obtained possession of the yellow sand and made her complexion even

as peerless as your own, Miss Inosent, the Siwellativygob told them that the beast could be transformed into a handsome prince only on one condition, and that was that she should kiss him on his great ugly mouth once every night and once every morning for three hundred and sixty-six consecutive days and nights. Well, you see the beast was so frightfully ugly that she just couldn't bring herself to do it, and so he remained a beast till the end of his days."

"Oh, I am so sorry," said little Miss Inosent.

"So was the beast," returned Mr. Chatterton. "And there is Mrs. Heighdecker raising her eyebrows at me; which means that I am to escort you to her and that you are to be presently whirled away and immured in her castle. I had so wanted one more waltz, too. *En passant*, have you ever noticed what black eyebrows Mrs. Heighdecker has? It is quite remarkable at her age."

"They are false; she paints them—oh! I ought not to have told you that."

"It doesn't matter, because I am sure you must be mistaken. She wouldn't do it at her age, you know," said that odd Mr. Chatterton.

Fred West occupied a seat in the Greystone carriage on the way home, and John kept him busy answering innumerable questions about former acquaintances, so that West had little

time to devote to Genevieve. The latter thought that he did it purposely, to avoid any possible references to their own married state or the romantic devotion which had culminated in their union. She was glad of that for her own sake and for John's. She could understand how he had suffered now, and she felt for his suffering more keenly than for her own.

"Of course, you will stay at my house, Fred, and we'll have your traps over the first thing in the morning," said John.

"I won't be able to stay with you to-night. It's out of the question. I have a business telegram to send, and it's necessary for me to get back to the hotel."

"Well, I know there is no changing your mind just now, so I'll give it up for the present," said John. "But I tell you what you will do. We're almost at my house now, and you'll come in and spend an hour with me over the grate fire and old times. I'll promise to let you go in an hour."

"What a grim old tyrant you are. I don't see how your wife puts up with you at all," said West, laughingly, as the horses stopped and the footman threw open the carriage door.

The three lingered in the hallway and loosened their wraps, for the night was cold. The Californian, fearful that his frank confession of op-

position to John's early attachment might have created an unfavorable impression in the mind of his beautiful wife, was entreating an assurance that she had forgiven him, in a hurried undertone.

There was no trace of haughtiness in her demeanor. In the slight droop of the dainty head, in the timidly anxious expression of the brown eyes, in the faint trembling of the little gloved hand that she held before the register, was more of pleading than in the spoken plea of Fred West. Perhaps it was the presence of the companion and confidant of his boyhood days; perhaps it was the tremulousness of the little fingers; perhaps it was the loosened curl that drooped over her cheek as one of brighter gold had fallen over the cheek of a little child years before, and for an instant the old passion, fierce, mighty, uncontrollable, swept over John Greystone's desolate heart. For that brief instant memory was annihilated, and there was no bitterness between them.

"You look tired, Genevieve," he said. "We won't keep you up any longer. Good-night."

"Good-night. Good-night, Mr. West."

She was about to take his hand, but remembered quickly that she and her husband had not clasped hands since that first night, and, deftly placing her fan in her right hand and glancing

from the half-proffered hand of Fred West, she left them, and started up the stairs. On the lower steps she stopped, and, turning, met the kindly smile of West still following her. She bent toward him to say good-night again, and added, entreatingly: "It doesn't matter about those other days, Mr. West, if you'll only like me now. I want you to like me now."

CHAPTER X.

OVER JOHN'S FIRE.

"Now, tell me all about yourself, young one," said the older of the two men when they were comfortably seated before the cheerful wood fire in the library.

John smiled at the well-remembered sobriquet that he had borne.

"Listen to the wind, Fred. Doesn't it carry you back to the old nights in the pine lands?"

West threw one leg comfortably over the arm of his chair, and regarded his cigar contemplatively. "Yes, it does," he said. "You always did love to listen to the wind. I don't think it

ever sang but one song to you. Somehow I can't place you with the ragged little tramp I picked up that Christmas morning. It's a long time ago, isn't it, boy?"

"Yes, a long time," John answered. And then they were both silent, West's gaze bent intently upon his companion, and the latter looking into the blazing embers.

"Young one, you've changed," said West.

"I am older than I was, Fred."

"Yes, three years older. What's three years? You look forty, John, and you are as glum as if you had seen a ghost."

"I have seen one."

"Well, I'm sorry you didn't call my attention to it. Come, tell me what you've been doing in the last three years. You have had success enough to satisfy a dozen ordinary men already, and now, at thirty-one, you're making a name for yourself in Congress. Light that cigar of yours and tell me how you managed to be elected."

"Some other time, old boy; it's a long story."

A slight cloud overspread the face of Fred West.

"There is no use trying, Fred, I can't be jolly to-night. I thought I could, or I wouldn't have made you come in."

"What is it, John? What is the matter?"

"Everything is the matter. Everything is dead against me, and I'll be at the end of my rope in a few days. The game is played out, Fred."

"What do you mean, young one? I can't understand. You're a millionaire and you are in Congress." And he stopped with that clinching argument.

"I'm pretty far from being a millionaire, Fred. I don't believe you'd give ten thousand dollars for what I'm worth. You see, I had to give up the iron works a month ago, and since then I've lost about everything else I had. You'll say I was a fool, and I know it now. I got in with some New York fellows on a big stock deal, and I lost from the start. I went in deeper and deeper till I had everything up on margins, and the market never turned. Just kept on going down, down, down. There isn't much left to lose now, and I know the end isn't far off." He bowed his head upon his hands and continued: "Now you know it all, Fred, and that's the reason I can't welcome you the way I'd want to. I'm virtually broke now. The public don't know, but it won't be long before they do."

"Why didn't you send for me, John? I own half of the 'Little Fred' still, and my pile is yours. How much do you want right away?"

John gulped down a lump in his throat and looked at his friend with moist eyes. "Thank you, Fred, but I couldn't take it. I couldn't."

"Do you want to hurt me, lad, that you refuse? Why, I always intended it for you and—your children, John, if you should have any. It's put down that way in the will. Take half of it now."

"Fred, I don't want to hurt you, God knows, but I can't take it. If you knew just how I felt you wouldn't press it on me. I'm tired of it all; I'm tired of St. Louis, I'm tired of Washington, I'm tired of Congress, I'm tired of business, I'm tired of the people I meet here, and I want to go back to the mines, with a pick on my shoulder." He rose and paced the floor nervously. "I'm a common man, Fred, and I'm tired of playing gentleman," he concluded, bitterly.

"Poor boy, it's too bad," said West, soothingly, "but it is not as bad as it seems to you just now. Let the money go. I'll talk reason into you about that after a while. There are better things than money in the world. Stay right here in Washington and stick to Congress till things begin to look up a bit. They can't touch your salary, can they?"

John smiled grimly and threw himself into a chair. "Why, my salary wouldn't pay the rent of this house," he said.

"Well, move into a smaller house, then. What's to hinder?"

"Have you thought of Mrs. Greystone?" asked John.

"Certainly I have, and I've been wondering how a strong man could break down under the loss of his money when he has a wife like you have to love him."

John did not answer; he only bowed his head lower upon his clasped hands.

"I guess you think it would hurt her to give up her fine house and her carriages, and her balls and her parties, and all the fine friends that are no friends at all; but you're wrong, lad, you're wrong. A woman's life ain't bound up in that sort of thing. That little woman upstairs would just give up everything and live in two rooms and never murmur for the man that she loved."

"Yes, Fred, for the man that she loved." He stopped short with the sudden memory of his wife's plea for Fred West to like her.

But the loyal friendship of Fred West had read his sorrow in those few words. He came over and placed his arm about John's shoulders, as he had done when he was a child. "If it's that trouble, lad, then I can't help you. If it's a heart trouble, lad, you'll have to bear it alone. You'll just have to stand the suffering. It's

hard, awful hard, but it will be easier after a while, thank God. I know just how much you suffer, John, for I have suffered, too. I haven't forgotten yet." He took John's hand and stroked it gently, even as a father might have stroked the hand of a sorely troubled son. There was nothing more that he could do, and he knew it. And so the fire died away to a few scattered embers, and the lights looked sickly and pale as the gray winter dawn crept in through the curtains. At last West went into the hall and muffled himself in his great coat, and just before they parted he said: "John, I don't want to pry into your secrets—I know when you get ready to tell me just what your trouble is that you will come and do it without the asking. And I don't want you to think that I blame you, for I couldn't do that; but don't be too hard on the girl, lad. Men can't understand women, and sometimes we're hard on them because of that. But I've been sitting here thinking of your wife, and I just know she's square, John. I'd stake my life on it."

CHAPTER XI.

THE OLD WHITE MUSLIN DRESS.

MISS TILDAH FITZHUGH! Miss Tildah Fitzhugh! What a thin, faded specter of a woman you are! What hollow eyes, what drawn cheeks, what wasted fingers you have! What a squeaky voice, what moist hands, and what a jerky tread is yours! Why don't you look at yourself in the mirror and go mad and throw yourself out of the window? How the winds laugh at you for all your heavy weather-strips; how the stars peer in and whisper about you for all your ghostly white curtains; how cold your room is for all that thick, leaden-hued carpet and the cheerless register in the corner! Why don't you warm it up? There are matches on your bare dressing-case—why don't you make a blaze? Why don't you burn those big empty chairs, those useless white curtains, the smooth, cold bed, the plain black dresses in your wardrobe and that old, old white muslin that you never wear? Why don't you do it? Why don't you do it? How old are you, Miss Tildah Fitzhugh?

Do you ever think how old you are? Why don't you put an end to it all? Why do you sit there biting your nails—smiling at nothing, in the coldest part of the room? Do you think you can hide anything from me, Miss Tildah Fitzhugh? Haven't you grown tired of that name on the visiting cards that you never use? Miss Tildah Fitzhugh!—have you ever thought how that name would look on a tombstone? What did you write on that bit of paper that you burned so carefully last night? "Mrs. Alfred West," "Mrs. Alfred West," over and over again. Why do you draw the curtains closer when you loosen that black gown? Do you think any one would care to see you arranging your toilet? Do you think the sun would look in at that north window even if it could? Why do you put on that white muslin dress with the faded blue ribbons? Don't you know how loosely it fits you? Don't you know that it was made for a young girl with full arms and rounded limbs, with rosy cheeks and smiling lips and laughing eyes? And that slender gold band, so much too large for your finger—why do you wear it? Heavens! how you start at that knock on the door!

It was only Genevieve. "Don't you want to come downstairs, auntie?" she asked. "I don't think it's good for you to stay up here by your-

self so much. You know I always like to have you in my room. Won't you come down?"

"No, not now. How old are you, child?"

"Twenty-two, auntie."

"Yes, twenty-two. You don't resemble Noel. I think you look more like your mother. She is a weak, foolish woman, but she is not wicked, like Noel. I am glad you don't resemble Noel. How do you like my new dress?"

Genevieve had not failed to notice the faded finery in which the poor lady was arrayed; but aware as she was of her aunt's eccentricities, she had concealed her surprise. I think it very pretty, auntie, but I like black better," she said.

"Well, I like white. He always liked white, too, and this was his favorite dress," said Aunt Tildah, smirking at herself in the mirror.

"Won't you come downstairs with me, auntie?"

"No, I expect him at any time now, and I want to be ready to receive him when he comes."

"When who comes, auntie?"

"It's a secret for the present, my dear, but you'll know soon enough. The clock told me I would see him last night, and I did. There's one good thing about clocks, they're truthful." And she stroked the black timepiece on her mantel. "I saw him come up the steps last night,

and I waited here for him, but I suppose he could not find the room, or maybe he feared that he might disturb me, because I saw him go away again. He might have waited in the parlor, and I'm sorry now that I didn't go down. But he'll be back again before long now, and I'll be ready to receive him when he comes."

Miss Tildah Fitzhugh, Miss Tildah Fitzhugh—what a good thing it is that clocks are truthful!

"I want to see Mr. and Mrs. Greystone," said Fred West, emphasizing the latter prefix, as he handed his card to the tall footman the evening after his midnight conference with John. He was shown into the parlor, where he found not only Genevieve, but that indefatigable Mrs. Heighdecker, her *protégée*, Miss Inosent, and that odd Mr. Chatterton. Genevieve advanced cordially to meet him, and a few minutes later John entered the room. The latter was at once monopolized by Mrs. Heighdecker, who began to task him severely for working himself to death. "I know how you do," she said; "you just work at the House all day, and then you come home and try to work all night. The first thing you know you will be sick. I wish I could take your wife's place for a week, and we'd see whether I wouldn't put a stop to it."

Meantime Mr. Chatterton had availed himself of the opportunity of a *tête-à-tête* with little Miss Inosent, and Fred West found himself quite naturally conversing with Genevieve on a sofa.

Mrs. Greystone. "You remember the story I told you about Lucy Kent and Mr. Sedgwick, Mrs. Heighdecker?"

Mrs. Heighdecker. "Yes. You refer to that pretty little doll-baby who was so much in love with him, I suppose? It was a shame the way he flirted with her."

Mrs. Greystone. "He was more serious than I gave him credit for being. I received a letter from mamma this morning, and she says they are to be married in June."

Mrs. Heighdecker. "Is it possible? I always thought he would make a brilliant marriage. Of course, Lucy Kent has nothing."

Mrs. Greystone. "Yes, she is well off now. Her father's brother, who lived in New York, and who lost his only child six months ago, left her everything he had. He died suddenly, you know."

Mrs. Heighdecker. "And now Mr. Sedgwick's long devotion is to be rewarded at last."

Mr. Greystone (to Mrs. Heighdecker). "So you would prescribe less work and more play for me?"

Mrs. Heighdecker (decidedly). "Yes. No work and all play, if necessary. Anything to keep those wrinkles off your face."

Mr. Greystone (pleasantly sarcastic). "What hour would you advise for retiring?"

Mrs. Heighdecker (sagely). "Two o'clock A.M. It isn't the hour you retire, but the hour at which you get up. Go to bed at two, and breakfast at eleven. You ought to go to the clubs and the theaters and parties, and every place where people enjoy themselves rationally, instead of working themselves to death. Poor Heighdecker! He might have been alive to-day if he had only followed my advice and given up the banking business."

Mr. Chatterton (fervently). "I give you my word, Miss Lily, that I have never in my life told any woman what I told you last night (truthfully). I had never even thought that I could love any woman before I saw you."

Miss Inosent (naively). "If you are not careful, Mr. Chatterton, you will really make me believe that you are in earnest."

Mr. Chatterton. "I wish that I could, with all my heart. Why won't you believe me?"

Miss Inosent (dubiously). "I don't know. I can't."

Mr. Chatterton (deeply anxious). "If you could—if you did believe me—could you not

feel for me? Would you not care for me a little?"

Miss Inosent (doubtfully). "It may be that I am not capable of loving."

Mr. Chatterton (impetuously). "You are capable, I could swear it. No woman with your beauty, your gentleness, your tender heart, could be incapable of the sweetest grace of womanhood. Oh, Lily, say at least that you will believe me!"

Miss Inosent. "I want to. Try to teach me."

Mrs. Greystone. "Then you don't dislike me now?"

Mr. West. "I have liked you ever since I knew you."

Mrs. Greystone (archly). "But that has only been for twenty-four hours."

Mr. West (slightly confused). "Is that all? It seems longer to me. Well, I liked you before I knew you—ever since you married John."

Mrs. Greystone. "I wish I had known you before that—years ago, when I was a girl."

Mrs. Heighdecker. "Mr. West, have you heard Mrs. Greystone sing?"

Mr. West. "No. I wish she would sing, though. Won't you sing, Mrs. Greystone?"

Miss Inosent. "Oh, do sing, please, Mrs. Greystone. Sing something romantic."

Mr. Chatterton. "Oh, do sing, Mrs. Grey-

stone. Sing 'The Nightingale.' (*Sotto voce*.) It's Miss Inosent's favorite."

Genevieve left West's side, and, sitting down at the piano, touched the keys softly. She did not sing either of the airs requested, but an olden song of other days, one that she thought Fred West might have heard: "Douglas, Douglas, Tender and True."

As the sound of the last plaintive note died, silence fell upon the group, and all eyes were turned toward a strange apparition in the doorway. It was that of a faded old woman, clad in a girlish costume of white muslin, ghastly with many ribbons of faded hue. Grotesquely fashioned paper flowers ornamented her gray hair, while the low neck and short sleeves revealed her thin arms and scrawny neck. As Fred West looked at the strange figure, she stretched her arms toward him wildly, and, with one broken sob, fell senseless to the floor.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CLOCK TALKS FOR THE LAST TIME.

TILDAH FITZHUGH had lain unconscious for hours in the big white bed in her own room. The winds rattled the shutters and laughed at her wasted figure; the short winter day deepened into early twilight, and the stars peeped through the stiff white curtains and whispered about her among themselves; the clock pointed its long finger at the bare toilet table, at the black gown in the closet, at the still woman on the bed and at the man who watched at her side. Through all those hours he sat there, chafing the thin, cold hands and waiting for her eyes to open.

The physician stood at the other side of the bed. He had looked at her, felt her thread-like pulse, listened to the faint beating of the tired heart, and shaken his head gravely.

"There was little hope, almost none," he had said. And the two consulting physicians who had been called in agreed with him.

"How long will it be, doctor?" asked Fred

West, without removing his glance from the pallid face.

“Toward morning, I think,” was the reply.

“Will she regain consciousness before the end?”

“It is probable that she will.”

And so they waited, speaking in whispers at first, and then not at all, till the room became so still that the clock could be heard talking to itself on the mantel. She had been smiling in her last conscious moments, and the smile remained on her lips. Again and again West bent over her hand and kissed it tenderly. And he prayed, not that she might not die, but that she might know before the end that he was at her side; that she might clasp his hand at parting; that she might pass the threshold of death with the knowledge that he had been true.

At midnight John came into the room and leaned softly over the unconscious woman. His eyes met those of Fred West—who had loved and lost, and had borne that secret sorrow in his heart for all those years; who had left hope downward-eyed at youth's last mile-stone, thirty years before; who had traversed the waste of thirty years alone with a memory, to find this woman he had loved at the end of his journey, and to wait for one pressure of the hand at the dark portal where Death was his rival.

And love conquered. About three hours after midnight West felt a faint trembling clasp of the hand that he held, and she opened her eyes. He bent over and kissed her and put his arm about her as a lover might. She smiled up at him, and he felt her fingers tighten feebly about his own.

"Darling, darling, I am so happy," she said. "I waited a long time, but I am happy now. I never doubted you, Fred, dear. I knew you would come. If you had only written; if you had only sent some word. But it is all right, now that you have come." For the first time she noticed that there were others in the room, but the physician beckoned them out, and those two were alone together.

"Dearest, I did write. Have you forgotten?"

"I didn't get the letters. It was Noel. Never mind now. I never—doubted you, Fred. I am happy now.

"Fred."

"Yes, dearest."

"Put the clock near me."

He brought it to the bed and placed it near her pillow. She put one arm feebly about it, but her eyes, fast becoming dimmed, still sought his face as if she would have them rest there till the end. And the end was very near.

“Fred.”

“Yes, my own love.”

“The — clock — always — said — that — you —
would — come — back.”

CHAPTER XIII.

AS ON THE FIRST NIGHT.

THE snows had drifted for a week over the grave of the poor, tired lady in Oakwood Cemetery, and the clock that had talked so much was as still on the dusty mantel in the silent chamber as her own heart under the frozen clay. Fred West was still in Washington, where he had remained in the hope of being of some service to John, whose financial situation grew more critical with each succeeding day. Fred West, who possessed a wealth of practical business knowledge, had sifted the situation to the bottom, which he found deplorably near the surface, and had pleaded in vain for John to start out afresh with a share of his mining property, to be used merely as a loan. But the latter would not hear

to his repeated proposals, and waited, with apparent apathy, for the end.

Leslie Kavanagh, the sole remaining adherent of the falling Greystone dynasty, had long since been provided with a comfortable sinecure in the Treasury Department, where he remained for the rest of his life in a subordinate position. He was popular in his new sphere, and never tired of telling his intimates of the greatness that he might have achieved, if—*ad infinitum*. Over the desk which he occupied for years may be seen to-day an engraving of Thomas Hart Benton.

Genevieve was sitting in the parlor alone one evening when she heard her husband's footsteps on the flagging of the outer court, for she had learned to know that step (slower now than it used to be), and to wait for it, too. The lock turned; there was a brief wait in the hall, where he took off his overcoat; the library door opened and closed, and all was still again. It was the same, always the same—he had no thought for her. She had almost given up hoping that it could ever be other than it was.

Presently the library door opened again, and her husband entered the room. She noticed how tired and care-worn he looked, and half rose from the easy-chair on which she sat to offer it to him.

“Don’t get up,” he said; “I am not going to sit down.”

He went to the window, and, drawing aside the heavy curtains, stood there looking out upon the wintry night. The parlor was brilliantly lighted, but it was so large that it looked dreary with only those two in it. His eyes wandered restlessly over the costly splendor; from the crystal chandeliers to the carved mantels; to the grand piano, with its silent keys and the open music upon it; to the beautiful black-garbed woman in the violet velvet chair; to her perfect features, her dainty, aristocratic head, her slender waist; her little foot, half hidden under the black skirt; to the white, jeweled fingers on which he had forbidden her to wear his wedding ring.

“I should think you would find it pleasanter in your own sitting-room,” he said. “Why do you sit here?”

“Because, because—” “She couldn’t tell him; the words wouldn’t come. “I don’t know,” she said, helplessly.

He took several nervous strides toward the mantel, and, as on the first night, leaned his elbow heavily upon it.

“Genevieve, we’ve played the farce out,” he said, bitterly. “I see things differently now from what I used to, and if I had it to do over

again I'd do differently. But what is done is done, and there is no use talking about that now. I guess you feel hard toward me, and I can't blame you. If it's any satisfaction for you to know it, I tell you now that I've been miserable from the beginning to the end. I tried to hide it and brag it off, but I found out how common I was. I thought I could buy happiness, but I know now that I couldn't have bought it for an hour with all the money I ever had."

She turned her face from him and asked, "Why are you telling me this, John?"

"Because I'm going out to the coast to-morrow morning, and I wanted to tell you before I went away. I won't come back here again, and it will be easy enough for you to get a divorce. It's a pretty poor return to make to you after these wasted years, but it is the best I can do. You'll be a free woman, and the St. Louis house is settled on you. I haven't a dollar in the world of my own, and I'm going to begin over again in the mines. Good-by."

He took one step toward her as if he would have taken her hand, then turned resolutely toward the door.

"You don't want to stay here? It is not hard for you to go?" she asked, without looking at him.

He stopped and looked at her intently, with

her eyes downcast, and her chin resting in the hollow of her little hand.

“There is nothing for me to stay for. If there is hardship in my going, it won’t be hard on anybody but me.”

“You haven’t any money left?”

“No, not a dollar,” he answered, wonderingly.

“If it was hard on any one else? If there was any one who wanted you to stay?”

He took one hasty step toward her and stopped.

She had not raised her eyes, and her hand was toying carelessly with a tassel on the arm of her chair.

“There is no one,” he said.

“And if there was some one?” Her voice trembled. “If I should tell you that I didn’t want a divorce, that I wanted to be with you always, no matter how poor you might be; that it would break my heart for you to leave me; that I love you, John?”

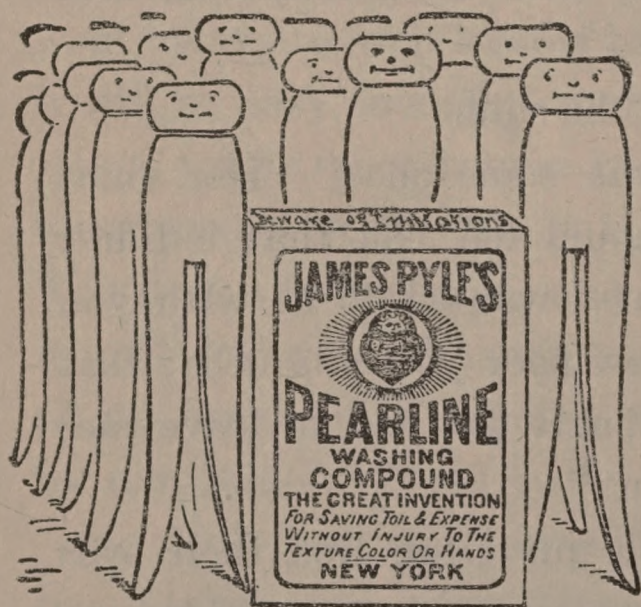
She looked up with quivering lips, their eyes met, and life’s revelation was unfolded to them.

He wound his arms about her, with all the tenderness of his nature. Her head now rested on his breast, and for the first time in his life he kissed her.

“Genevieve, dearest, dearest, can you ever forgive me?”

She looked up at him with all her woman's love in her eyes, and there was no need for her lips to answer.

THE END.



“On or off the line, we're with the majority—‘stuck’ on Pearlina!” And they're right—you will observe that their heads are level. Millions of women sing the same song as the clothes-pins. They

may express it differently, but they mean the same thing. They mean that their work is easy and sooner done—and better done. No clothes worn out with the endless rub, rub, rub on the washboard. No backs tired out with it, either.

Beware of imitations.

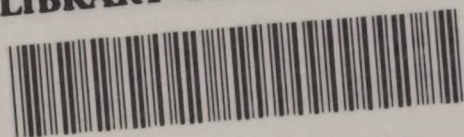
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